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Governor



Karen E. Timberlake  
Secretary

**State of Wisconsin**  
Department of Health Services

**DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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March 25, 2021

Christine Haag, Director, Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment  
Steven Elmore, Director, Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
101 S Webster Street, Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53703

Subject: Area-wide advisory due to PFAS contamination of private wells on French Island, La Crosse County

Dear Ms. Haag and Mr. Elmore,

As you know, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is working closely with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to respond to PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination of private wells on French Island in La Crosse County. As of 12pm on March 24, DNR was aware of PFAS-related sample results from approximately 185 different private wells located on French Island. PFAS has been detected in all but one sample. Preliminary information suggests that PFAS concentrations exceed the recommended groundwater standards in 61 of these samples.

After extensive cross-agency consultation between DHS and DNR, it is clear that both agencies agree that the extent of PFAS contamination on French Island cannot be determined with currently available data. Private wells with elevated PFAS levels have been found in different areas on the island. We cannot predict the likelihood of PFAS contamination in untested wells at this time.

Results from additional testing are expected which may better characterize the degree and extent of PFAS contamination on French Island. We remain concerned about possible PFAS exposures among French Island households that contain vulnerable individuals or lack the means to pursue testing and mitigation while these investigations proceed. Thus, we are issuing an **interim area-wide drinking water health advisory** for the island pending additional data that may allow for refinement of the advisory area.

For private well users within the advisory area, we recommend that caution be exercised in using well water for drinking, food preparation, or other consumptive purposes.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this advisory. DHS will continue to work with DNR to identify options for providing safe drinking water to French Island residents whose well water is suspected or confirmed to be affected by PFAS contamination. DHS will also remain a close partner to

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DNR in broader investigatory efforts, reviewing data and providing recommendations to ensure public health is protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Werner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being the most prominent.

Mark A. Werner, PhD

Director, Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health

cc: Jane Klekamp, Interim Health Officer, La Crosse County Health Department