

NEWS RELEASE

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PFAS Contamination Found Near Vermont Army National Guard's Camp Johnson

The Vermont PFAS/Military Poisons Coalition is raising the alarm again after it found high levels of PFAS toxins in the pond located in the popular Gilbrook Nature Area of Winooski, Vermont. The pond is about a half mile southwest of the Camp Johnson Army National Guard Base. Last week, the Vermont PFAS/Military Poisons Coalition reported high levels of PFAS in the Salmon Hole of the Winooski River.

The recent water test at the Gilbrook pond revealed 84.3 parts per trillion (ppt) of 17 PFAS contaminants with concentrations totaling 37.8 ppt for the five state-regulated compounds (PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFNA). Vermont regulates these five compounds at 20 ppt in drinking water and groundwater. The test results reported the following findings for 17 PFAS contaminants:

- PFOA @ 6.1 ppt;
- PFOS @ 17.2 ppt;
- N-EtFOSAA @ 2.1 ppt;
- N-MeFOSAA @ 6.4 ppt;
- PFBA @ 4.2 ppt;
- PFDA @ 5.8 ppt;
- PFDoA @ 5.1 ppt;
- PFNA @ 11.9 ppt;
- PFUnA @ 4.9 ppt;
- PFBS @ 1.1 ppt;
- PFHpA @ 2.6 ppt;
- PFHxA @ 4.4 ppt;
- PFPeA @ 5.0 ppt;
- PFTTrDA @ 1.0 ppt;
- 6:2diPAP @ 2.8 ppt;
- FOSAA @ 1.2 ppt; and
- PFOSA @ 2.5 ppt.

In the April 2019, Preliminary Assessment Report prepared by AECOM for the Vermont Army National Guard (ARNG), the Army denies it has contaminated the installation and points to the Champlain Cable Corporation (CCC), an adjacent property owner, for the PFAS contamination found on base.

The Army report states, "Based on the documented absence (1988-present) of the use or release of PFAS-containing materials at Camp Johnson, no "Areas of Interest" were identified during the Preliminary Assessment. Evidence does not indicate that current or former ARNG

activities contributed PFAS contamination to soil, groundwater, surface water, or sediment at the facility or adjacent areas. Camp Johnson will not move forward in the CERCLA process.”

CERCLA is the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, known as Superfund. Not moving forward with the CERCLA process means the PFAS contamination at Camp Johnson will not be investigated or cleaned up.

The Army says it looked around and there’s been no use of PFAS on base since 1988. Army facilities across the country generally began using PFAS foams in fire-training exercises in the early 1970’s and have used them until a few years ago. Nevertheless, the PFAS toxins from that era are still with us and may be with us forever since they never degrade.

Despite the VT ARNG denial of using PFAS at Camp Johnson, on November 27, 2019 Camp Johnson shipped [1,000 drum loads](#) of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) containing PFAS for incineration to the [Norlite Plant in Cohoes, NY](#). This fact challenges the Army’s assertion that there has been no use or release of PFAS-containing materials since 1988. Why then, would they have 1,000 drum loads of the stuff on hand?

The Army is the least transparent of the military branches in matters of contamination. It is disingenuous for the Army to walk away from the potential liability here to the public that it is sworn to protect and serve. A robust investigation for PFAS on the base is warranted.

All evidence suggests that both the Army and Champlain Cable Corporation should be held accountable for the PFAS contamination. The [PFC Investigation Summary Report](#) on the Champlain Cable Corporation property by ATC Group Services in February 2017 provides evidence of PFAS contamination. As a result of the documented contamination, Champlain Cable Corporation was designated as a Hazardous Site by the VTDEC.

The Army has a convenient scapegoat in the cable company next door. The AECOM report provides compelling evidence showing that CCC contaminated Camp Johnson with PFAS. The report states, “Between 1966 and 1977, liquid wastes were poured onto the ground outside of the building including along the roadway to the east of the facility and in an area to the northeast of the facility, referred to as the “sand pit.” The drainage area surrounding the south and west of the facility topographically slopes southeast towards Camp Johnson.”

PFAS has been found in groundwater on CCC’s property. Groundwater samples collected in August 2018 showed PFAS detections in 23 of 24 wells sampled at CCC, with PFAS compounds exceeding the 20 ppt Drinking Water Health Advisory in 22 samples. The highest total concentration of the five state regulated compounds (7,065 ppt) was detected in the “sand pit” area.

CCC manufactures wire and cable coatings for aircraft, computer, and energy industries. According to the AECOM report, “The waste products have historically contained lubricating solutions, degreasing solvents and liquid corrosives. These manufacturing processes have been found to use PFAS.”

Despite whom is to blame, the Vermont PFAS/Military Poisons Coalition is calling for the state to:

- Immediately begin regular testing of fish and water in Vermont rivers and in Lake Champlain for PFAS contamination.
- Ban the entire class of PFAS chemicals in Vermont, including the manufacture and inclusion of PFAS in all products sold in or imported into Vermont. Remediation of these chemicals from the environment is far too expensive and difficult a task (if not impossible). The far cheaper and far more effective alternative is to prevent their release into our air, water, and soil in the first place.
- Stop landfills, refineries, and other industries from dumping all forms of industrial leachate into public waterways. Stop municipalities and private waste processors from dumping sewage sludge and septage on land located in Vermont or neighboring states. Stop private

waste processors from importing sewage sludge and septage and all other solid waste into Vermont.

- Pressure the military branches to fully investigate and clean up the contamination on their bases and sites.

Governor Scott can begin by following the lead of Governor Whitmer of Michigan by mandating that the state no longer purchase products that contain PFAS.

Water is sacred and we must adopt the precautionary principle to protect living beings and the environment for future generations.

Sources:

- <https://www.nationalguard.mil/Leadership/Joint-Staff/Personal-Staff/Public-Affairs/Community-Relations/Environmental/PFAS-PFOA-Library/Vermont/FileId/286417/>
- https://patelder.weebly.com/uploads/1/0/3/6/10362012/cohoes_incineration_2.pdf
- <https://anrweb.vt.gov/PubDocs/DEC/Hazsites/770046.2016.-.17.PFAS.SI.pdf>