



The City of



Public Utilities

FACT SHEET

Detection of Perfluorooctanic Acid and Perfluorooctane Sulfate in El Cajon Well

Many water agencies in California were recently directed by the state to test water supply wells for a range of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances-type (PFAS) chemicals. The City of San Diego was directed by the state to test El Cajon Well. The well is owned and operated by Lake Cuyamaca Recreation and Park District. Per an agreement with the district, the City takes up to 500-acre feet of water annually and the City is responsible for monitoring the water quality of the well.

Following tests conducted at the well, the City detected both chemicals.

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances-type Chemicals

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances include perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), two chemicals once commonly used in many consumer products. Although no longer manufactured in the U.S., the substances are still used in products made in other countries that could be imported into the U.S.

How PFOA and PFOS effect Water Quality

The chemicals have been known to enter the water cycle through conventionally treated wastewater discharges from sewer treatment facilities, landfills and other locations where the substances were used outdoors.

Testing of El Cajon Well

El Cajon Well contributes approximately 0.6% of the entire flow of water entering the City's Alvarado Water Treatment Plant on an annual basis. Tests were conducted on June 11 and July 11, 2019, and confirmed detections of PFOA and PFOS at levels that exceeded the state's notification levels. Importantly, this well does not supply water directly to customers.

Tests showed concentrations of PFOA at 18 parts per trillion (ppt) and PFOS at 29 ppt., both of which exceed the notification levels for these two compounds. The notification level for PFOS at the time of sampling was 13 ppt and for PFOA was 14 ppt. These notification levels have since been revised by the California Division of Drinking Water to 6.5 ppt and 5.1 ppt, respectively. For perspective, one part per trillion is the equivalent to a single grain of sand in an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Is my health in any danger due to PFOA and PFOS detected in the El Cajon Well?

Water reaching San Diego water customers continues to meet all federal and state safe drinking water requirements.

The state's testing order only requires water agencies to inform their governing bodies of test results that exceed the notification levels adopted by the state. Although the water delivered to the community meets

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**Page 2: Public Utilities DRAFT
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all federal and state drinking water requirements, as part of its commitment to transparency and community health, the City of San Diego elected to share these results publicly.

Next Steps

The City will continue regularly monitoring the water quality of El Cajon Well, including testing for PFOA and PFOS. The information will be sent to the state's San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board and included in future annual Drinking Water Quality Reports issued by the City and distributed to all San Diego water customers.

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