Military ignores EPA on chemicals

By Kyle Ragenstone

A new U.S. Department of Defense policy appears to disregarded safety recommendations drafted by the Environmental Protection Agency for how to handle firefighting chemical contamination in groundwater, drawing criticism from lawmakers and activists who are calling for strict regulation.

Specifically, a DOD memo distributed across military leadership in October sets a “screening level” for the chemicals that is 10 times higher than what the EPA recommended last spring. Such screening levels are used as thresholds to determine whether the military must further investigate and potentially clean a chemical contamination, or whether it can simply disregard it and take no further action.

The chemicals in question are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which have been used for decades in firefighting foams at hundreds of military bases across the country. The man-made chemicals are of particular interest in southeast Pennsylvania, where major drinking water contamination has impacted communities near military bases in Warminster, Warrington and Horsham. Municipal leaders of the three towns have since smeared policies to remove the chemicals below detectable levels in drinking water. But testing has already found the chemicals at elevated levels in the blood of local residents, and health studies have previously been linked by some studies to health effects including high cholesterol, leukemia in children, immunotoxicity, developmental effects, and some cancers, although

In a new spotlight

First public impeachment hearing gets underway, with one witness saying Trump asked about Ukraine probes

By Lisa Mascaro and

Mary Clare Jalonick

WASHINGTON — A top American diplomat revealed new evidence Wednesday of President Donald Trump’s efforts to press Ukraine to investigate political rivals as House investigators launched public impeachment hearings for just the fourth time in the nation’s history.

The victims’ families, accompanied by advocates from Network of Victim Assistance, continue to wait for a verdict into the late afternoon Wednesday. [MICHELE HADDON / PHOTOJOURNALIST]
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Wednesday’s question: Which team will win a significant PFAS pollution investigation of PFAS, and put forth a 400-ppt screening level to be a reason why EPA has not yet finalized its recommendation? With the DOD appearing to support a 70-ppt limit for drinking water, but not groundwater, as the EPA recommends.

**PROBE**

In an event Monday at the VPPAP headquarters in Philadelphia, U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick said he is concerned about the executive branch’s efforts to limit the use of PFAS and put forth a 400-ppt screening level to determine if groundwater is being contaminated by PFOS and PFOA.

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