

You May Be Contacted by Mass DEP to Volunteer for a Water Quality Study

PFAS Well Water Testing

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) have been used since the 1940s for products such as oil and water repellents in cookware and other products, in plastics, in fire fighting foams, in semiconductors, and film and photography products. While no longer produced and used in the U.S., they persist in the environment and can travel through groundwater and waterways into drinking water wells. Once ingested, PFAS can accumulate in the body and have been linked adverse effects in neonates and new borns; and liver damage, cancer, and immune disorders in adults.

A new study from the Mass DEP under the direction of UMass Amherst has started to gather information on PFAS occurrence in well water across the state. Boxford has been chosen to participate in the study due to our reliance on well water.

Mass DEP is selecting a subset of Boxford addresses based on geographic distribution to participate in this study. You may receive a postcard inviting you to join this study (postcard should look like the image below). Joining is voluntary, and the identification of individual residences will be kept confidential. You will be provided instructions and asked to collect samples of your water (before any treatment systems) and send them to a laboratory for analysis. Sampling containers and mail envelopes will be provided. There will be no cost for the analysis. You will receive the test results and additional information should your results show detectable PFAS concentrations.



Your BOH met with the UMass and DEP to discuss this program. We see it as important and deserving of participation. Members of the Board who have extensive experience in water testing and the analysis methods being used for PFAS have reviewed the measuring tests and methods to be used. Our only concern is whether the methods will be sensitive enough to accurately detect PFAS in water samples. We invite anyone who does volunteer for the program to consult with us before testing, and after testing if you are concerned about your results.