



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

NICK LYON  
DIRECTOR

July 28, 2016

Denise Bryan, Health Officer  
District Health Department #2  
630 Progress Street  
West Branch, MI 48661

Dear Ms. Bryan:

This letter is in response to your request for a statement indicating that water filtered through reverse-osmosis (RO) systems that were provided in response to the perfluorinated chemical (PFC) contamination issue near the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda can be used for drinking and cooking.

On February 26, 2016, based on a recommendation from the Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), District Health Department #2 (DHD2) issued a health advisory to specific residents whose drinking water wells were impacted by PFC contamination from the former Air Force base, advising that they seek an alternate water supply. Through funding provided by MDHHS, DHD2 has worked with owners of impacted drinking water wells to install RO systems or water coolers.

**MDHHS considers the water filtered by the RO systems to be potable.** This conclusion is based on:

- The Culligan Aqua-Cleer® treatment system, which is the RO system being installed in Oscoda-area homes, is one of the systems tested for PFC removal by the Minnesota Department of Health.<sup>1</sup> The Minnesota study indicated that, when the system is properly installed and maintained, it will provide good performance for removal of PFCs from drinking water.
- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Office of Drinking Water and Municipal Assistance, Contamination Investigation Unit, agreed that the Aqua-Cleer® system would be an appropriate choice for an interim remedy. Although there currently are no standards for water filters regarding the removal of PFCs, the DEQ stated that the Aqua-Cleer® system meets NSF/ANSI 42, 53, and 58 standards for removal of many chemicals, including organics that would have chemical properties similar to PFCs.
- The DEQ Remediation and Redevelopment Division, which is overseeing the cleanup at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base, plans to spot-check several of the systems that have been installed in the Oscoda area. Samples will be taken

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/wells/waterquality/poudevicefinal.pdf>

pre- and post-system and sent to the DEQ contract laboratory for PFC analysis to verify filter performance. These samples are expected to be taken in early August, with results received in September.

It should be noted that users of the RO systems must follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance of the units. As stated in the Acknowledgment and Release agreement that well owners signed with DHD2, "Maintenance, labor, cost, and equipment of the system shall be the responsibility of the owner after initial installation."

Thank you for partnering with MDHHS as we serve the community.

Sincerely,



Christina Bush, Toxicologist  
Toxicology and Response Section  
Division of Environmental Health  
Bureau of Epidemiology and Population Health  
Population Health and Community Services Administration

[Bushc6@michigan.gov](mailto:Bushc6@michigan.gov)

517-284-4974

CC: Chuck Thomas, MDEQ ODWMA  
Matt Remus, MDEQ ODWMA  
Robert Delaney, MDEQ RRD