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To: Franklin Residents  
From: Chief McLaughlin, Franklin Fire Department

**Re: PFAS and Foam**

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Recently, the Franklin DPW published the 2020 Drinking Water Report, in which the topic of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) was explained. As stated, one of the possible sources of groundwater contamination may come from the use of “legacy” firefighting foams, which routinely contained 2% - 5% PFAS by volume; specifically, Class B AFFF, which is used to extinguish burning hydrocarbons or flammable liquids.

As your fire department, we just wanted to make you aware that this topic has not been ignored by the Franklin Fire Department, the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services (DFS), or the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). In 2018, in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services, MassDEP chose to implement a foam “take-back” program to assist fire departments in removing these foams from current stockpiles and ensuring they are properly disposed of, rather than used during trainings or firefighting and subsequently released into the environment.

MassDEP’s program targeted foams manufactured before 2003, as manufacturers stopped production of suspect foams in 2002. Recognizing the challenges proper disposal would present to the budgets of most municipalities, MassDEP decided to fund the disposal of these legacy foams through its Massachusetts Chapter 21E / Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup (BWSC) capital funding, consistent with programmatic goals of “pollution prevention” and elimination of “threats of release” of hazardous materials. Under the “take-back program,” MassDEP offered to pay for foam removal and disposal; the local fire departments were responsible for replacing the foam with safer foam alternatives. As part of this take-back program, Franklin Fire was able to dispose of approximately fifty (50) gallons of outdated foam, at no expense to the townspeople.

As the take-back program progressed, many fire departments requested confirmation that current Class B AFFF foam was safe. While these foams often contain some amount

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of PFAS, it is at lower levels than legacy foam and includes PFAS that are more stable (so-called "short chain") and expected to have less of an impact on the environment. New "Fluorine Free Foam," aka "F3" foam, is just now entering the main-stream market. Currently, the majority of Franklin Fire apparatus, that carry foam, carry these newer F3 foams.

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