

March
2018

Saint-Gobain, MVD reach settlement

Company to fund restoration of two public wells contaminated by PFOAs

A week after the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services reached agreement with Saint-Gobain to have 298 disputed properties in the Merrimack area connected to public water, the Merrimack Village District announced a settlement with Saint-Gobain to fund the restoration of two public wells that were shut down after Saint-Gobain reported PFOA contamination in 2016.

The MVD agreement, announced March 27, states that Saint-Gobain will fund the design, construction and installation of a Granulated Activated Carbon system that will remove PFOAs and PFOs from wells 4 and 5 that were taken out of service over two years ago, when the contamination of public water by Saint-Gobain was announced.

Since then, the DES has tested private wells in the Merrimack area and found many with PFOA levels above the state and federal standard of 70 parts per trillion, prompting them to provide bottled water to residents as they wait to arrange for connections to public water, which is safe from contamination.

The consent decree pertains to private well owners, while the MVD agreement concerns

public water.

"The decree is relative to properties with private wells so we were not involved with negotiations and final agreement," Ron Miner, the MVD superintendent said.

"We are extremely pleased to reach this agreement with MVD," said Tom Kinisky, CEO of Saint-Gobain. *"With this settlement agreement now*

signed, we remain committed to coordinating with the needed partners to get the work done."

Miner said Saint-Gobain will provide the funding and MVD will oversee the construction. The final design will be completed later this year and construction will begin soon after.

A Granulated Activated Carbon system is made from organic materials with activated carbon that absorbs synthetic chemicals in drinking water. Miner said, *"It is a proven method of removing 90% or greater of PFCs in drinking water."* MVD chose it over other treatment options, including ion exchange, resin and membrane filtration.

Dina Pokedoff, a Saint-Gobain spokesperson, said, *"Typically, filtration systems include at least two GAC-filled vessels, arranged in a lead-lag series configuration. These systems are usually designed so that the water meets or exceeds drinking water standards when it exits the lead vessel, so the lag vessel serves as a backup."*

Saint-Gobain's agreement to pay for the repair of Wells 4 and 5 follows the company's payment for sampling of the wells and 30 percent of the design work, Miner said.

The company has also paid for the bottled water private well owners have used while waiting to be connected to public water.

DES and MVD officials have praised Saint-Gobain for its response to the contamination of local water, while many other officials and residents have condemned the company for its use of PFOs.

"Saint-Gobain has connected hundreds of properties, provided bottled water and paid for site investigation expenses," James Martin, a DES spokesman said. But Jackie Flood, a Merrimack town council member, said, *"Saint-Gobain has befouled the water and it's inexcusable."*

Pokedoff said, *"We have been in ongoing discussions with the MVD since learning about the presence of PFOA in wells 4 and 5. During this time, wells 4 and 5 have been offline and MVD has been using other wells in*

their system to supply water to their customers. This announcement is the result of the collaborative discussions throughout the past couple of years, and both parties agree that this is the best-in-class and most sustainable option for the community."

Miner said, *"We are pleased with this outcome, and look forward to getting the system online."*