



NEWS RELEASE

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Orange County Water District Launches the Nation's Largest PFAS Pilot Program to Identify a Local Treatment Remedy to Remove PFAS from Groundwater

Fountain Valley, Calif. (December 4, 2019) – The Orange County Water District (OCWD) today announced the launch of its pilot program that will test various treatment options for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, a family of manmade heat and water resistant chemicals found in numerous everyday consumer products that have infiltrated groundwater supplies over several decades. While the levels of PFAS in Orange County groundwater wells are relatively low, OCWD and its retail water agencies are exploring long-term solutions to ensure that water supplies continue to meet all state and federal water quality standards.

The goal of the pilot program is to help retail water agencies in Orange County determine the best treatment methods available to them. Through the program, OCWD will be testing different types of granular activated carbon (GAC) and ion exchange (IX) products, as well as novel adsorbents just emerging in the market, to determine which applications are best suited for Orange County's diverse aquifer water quality and geochemistry. All of the treatment methods are expected to remove PFAS from groundwater to below detectable levels.

"The pilot testing will help us design and implement the best project for Orange County to safeguard the basin and meet the needs of OCWD and its retail agencies and ratepayers," said OCWD president Vicente Sarmiento.

After a competitive bid process, OCWD selected Jacobs, a leading water and infrastructure engineering company, to review candidate PFAS treatment remedies and support OCWD in the design of the pilot. OCWD has installed the pilot system, provided by Evoqua Water Technologies, and will operate the pilot to draw water from an OCWD-owned well near Warner Basin in Anaheim that has low concentrations of PFAS. The pilot will test GAC, IX, and novel products from various providers including Cabot Corporation, Calgon Carbon Corporation, Evoqua Water Technologies, ECT2, Jacobi Carbons, Purolite, Minerals Technologies Cetco, and CycloPure. Jacobs is also completing related laboratory-scale testing for a subset of the same products (GAC and novel adsorbents) with their laboratory partner Battelle, using an established procedure known as Rapid Small-Scale Column Testing (RSSCT). The lab testing will run on OCWD's pilot test well water supply and on nine individual retailers' well water sources.

Additionally, OCWD has selected Carollo, a leading water engineering firm, to assist OCWD with a regional planning study to evaluate how such treatment would be rapidly implemented and conduct pre-design work. OCWD is investing approximately \$1.4 million in the pilot and related study.

"The most important thing is that Orange County water is safe to drink," added Patrick Versluis, OCWD's director of water quality. "PFAS contamination is a pervasive problem throughout the nation, and we are doing everything in our power to be a part of the solution."

Water is just one of many ways that people come in contact with these substances, with food and dust also considered potentially significant sources. These chemicals are resistant to heat, water and oil and have been used for decades in hundreds of industrial applications and consumer products such as furniture fabrics, food packaging, clothing and water, grease or stain resistant materials. PFAS have been found both in the environment and in blood samples of the general U.S. population. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has also detected PFAS chemicals in the U.S. food supply.

Due to the prolonged use of PFOA and PFOS in many common consumer products, the chemicals have been known to enter the water cycle through conventionally treated wastewater discharges from sewage treatment facilities, landfills and locations where the substances were used outdoors. Most people have been exposed to these chemicals through consumer products, but drinking water can be an additional source of exposure in communities where these chemicals have entered water supplies.

OCWD's pilot program will launch this December. To learn more about PFAS and OCWD, please visit ocwd.com or watch the "[Solutions to Addressing PFAS](#)" video.

About the Orange County Water District

The Orange County Water District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities rely on the groundwater basin, managed by OCWD, to provide 77% of their water demands: Anaheim, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Stanton, Tustin, Villa Park, Westminster and Yorba Linda. For more information about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com, like @OCWaterDistrict on Facebook, follow @OCWDWaterNews on Twitter, follow @OCWD on Instagram, and follow Orange County Water District on LinkedIn.

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