

Casey,

GSWSA's mission has always been to provide water and wastewater services that protect public health and the environment, promote economic development, and enhance the quality of life for its residential and business customers and tourists visiting our beautiful area. To that end, GSWSA is currently in full compliance with all Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) (formerly DHEC) requirements and is committed to maintaining this compliance in the future.

As you also know, EPA recently revised its stance on PFAS, which are sometimes called "forever chemicals," requiring their reduction in the U.S. water supply by 2029 and requiring specialized testing, which is set to be completed by 2027. This mandate is both unfunded and a huge undertaking for public water systems nationwide (roughly 6,000), and GSWSA is committed to conducting its due diligence before making decisions that could affect the Authority and its customers for a long time to come.

You are also likely aware that there was a class action lawsuit against DuPont and 3M, which resulted in class action settlements, and in which GSWSA had to decide whether to opt in or opt out. At the advice of its legal counsel and advisors, GSWSA chose to opt out, and GSWSA is currently in discussion with its legal team as to its options and possible remedies. Generally, GSWSA has a policy of not commenting on pending litigation. This policy also extends to matters that are under investigation for potential legal action. However, because this issue is very important not only to GSWSA, but also to the citizens and visitors of the Grand Strand, I am answering the questions you prepared to the extent I can below.

PFAS are a large group of man-made chemicals that don't occur naturally in the environment. They have been widely used in various industries because of their ability to repel oil and water and to resist heat and chemical reactions. These characteristics have made them popular in products like non-stick cookware, water-resistant clothing, cleaning products, and some firefighting foams. PFAS come from various industrial sources that release PFAS in their wastewater into rivers and streams. According to EPA, "PFAS can be present in our water, soil, air and food as well as in materials found in our homes or workplace . . ." PFAS in the water system can only be removed with advanced water filtration technologies. There are several different technologies available for water utilities to reduce PFAS from drinking water and water systems, plus home options if customers are interested (EPA has published guidance to help consumers research and vet home options).

GSWSA is investigating the occurrence of PFAS chemicals in our water supplies, as well as the source(s) of the PFAS contamination. Compliance with the new drinking water regulation is to be determined on the basis of a four-quarter running annual average. We are therefore engaging in investigatory efforts to determine our likely compliance status for when the regulation becomes effective and enforceable in 2029. We are also proactively working with engineers to investigate potential PFAS treatment solutions at GSWSA. Should our investigatory efforts ultimately find PFAS levels above the new regulatory levels, we are prepared to implement a technology-based treatment solution to PFAS so that we will be fully compliant with the new PFAS standards in 2029.

Bottom line: GSWSA is in full compliance with all state and federal regulations. GSWSA meets current guidelines and is ahead of the timeline for PFAS testing requirements that will go into effect in 2027. GSWSA will keep customers updated throughout this five-year timeline.

For your resource purposes, I am providing you links to GSWSA's 2023 Water Quality Reports and to EPA's website.

Link to EPA website: <https://www.epa.gov/>

Link to GSWSA's 2023 Water Quality Reports: <https://www.gswsa.com/water-quality-reports.cfm>