

More than 250 Wainscott wells could be tested for contamination

Updated October 18, 2017 3:45 PM

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Health officials said Wednesday that they are now seeking to test private wells on more than 250 properties near the East Hampton Airport for chemical contamination, nearly triple the Wainscott properties initially sought for sampling.

The change came after officials learned that 269 properties in the 1-square-mile area of concern south of the airport have private wells, Town Supervisor Larry Cantwell said.



The Suffolk County Department of Health Services wants to test water samples from 269 private wells on Wainscott properties for perfluorinated compounds. Photo Credit: Gordon M. Grant

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services announced last week that it was seeking to survey private wells on 91 Wainscott properties for levels of perfluorinated compounds after a nearby private well contained amounts above the federal health advisory level of 0.07 parts per billion.

Another private well had a concentration of perfluorononanoic acid, known as PFNA, that prompted the New York State Department of Health to recommend it not be used for drinking or cooking, the Suffolk health department said Wednesday, noting there is no health advisory for that property.

Town officials are providing free bottled water to area residents as a precaution.

Cantwell previously said the contamination from perfluorooctanoic acid and/or perfluorooctanesulfonic acid, known respectively as PFOA and PFOS, may have come from firefighting foam used at the airport. He encouraged residents to allow the health department to test their private wells for free.

“We need to know the test results in order to better understand the breadth of the potential problem as well as what the potential solution might be,” Cantwell said Wednesday.

Exposure to the chemicals can affect the immune system and fetal health and development, as well as cause liver damage, cancer and thyroid problems, the Environmental Protection Agency has said.

Residents can call 631-852-5810 to have their wells tested, and 631-324-4183 to get free bottled water.