

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVEN BELLONE
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

JAMES L. TOMARKEN, MD, MPH, MBA, MSW
Commissioner

January 5, 2017

Michael Sendlenski, Town Attorney
Town of East Hampton
159 Pantigo Road
East Hampton, New York 11937

Re: Chromium in Groundwater

Dear Mr. Sendlenski:

I am in receipt of your letter of October 31, 2016 regarding concerns about hexavalent chromium in public and private water supply and surface waters in Wainscott expressed to you by a resident of Wainscott, Mr. Simon Kinsella. Enclosed with your letter was correspondence you had received from Mr. Kinsella (10/24/16) which identified a cement plant as a possible source of chromium contamination.

We have reached out to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for information about this facility. They identified a concrete mix, as opposed to cement, facility in Wainscott, located off Montauk Highway that is operated by Suffolk Cement. Concrete mix facilities are not regulated by the NYSDEC. However, this facility is inspected by our department periodically due to the presence of registered tanks. These inspections specifically look for compliance with Suffolk County code as it relates to the proper operation and maintenance of storage tanks. If evidence of a release that may impact groundwater is observed, the NYSDEC is notified. No such evidence was observed during the most recent inspection in December of 2015.

Mr. Kinsella's letter referenced an East Hampton Star article (9/27/16) which identified concentrations of hexavalent chromium ranging from 0.033 ppb to 0.54 ppb in public wells serving East Hampton. Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) regulates and oversees the public water supplies in Suffolk County to ensure compliance with the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and the New York State and Suffolk County Sanitary Code drinking water standards. Although New York State public water suppliers are not required to continue to monitor for hexavalent chromium and there is currently no specific standard for hexavalent chromium under federal and state regulation, SCDHS has required the major public water suppliers in Suffolk County to continue to collect at least one sample annually from any well that previously had a detection.

In addition to reviewing public water suppliers' self-monitoring analytical results, the SCDHS also regularly collects surveillance samples to ensure compliance with applicable standards. The hexavalent chromium concentrations referenced in the East Hampton Star article are similar to results of SCDHS surveillance sampling of drinking water supplies elsewhere in Suffolk County, indicating the potential for a natural source as chromium is a naturally occurring metal in soil. SCDHS sampling of drinking water supplies in Suffolk County has detected hexavalent chromium in approximately 74% of drinking water samples and detectable concentrations ranged between 0.03 ppb and 12.24 ppb, with a median of 0.25 ppb based on data collected between April 2013 and June 2016. SCDHS sampling of a Suffolk County Water Authority public water



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supply well field in Wainscott on August 11, 2015 detected hexavalent chromium at concentrations ranging from <0.03 ppb to 0.65 ppb.

Further, SCDHS has collected samples from private wells in the area. A review of the total chromium results for homes sampled on Cowhill Road and Hedges Lane between 1999 and 2012 were all found to be less than 1 ppb, except one result which was just above the detection level at 1.78 ppb. Please note that SCDHS also inspects and collects samples annually from a business with its own public water supply well which is located between the concrete mix facility and Georgica Pond. The last time this location was sampled by SCDHS was on August 30, 2016 and the total chromium result was less than 1 ppb and the hexavalent chromium result was less than 0.03 ppb in this sample. As noted in Mr. Kinsella's letter, these levels found in Wainscott are well below the California drinking water standard of 10 ppb as well as the federal and New York State drinking water standard for total chromium of 100 ppb.

SCDHS sampling specifically for hexavalent chromium in private water supply wells across Suffolk County has found that approximately 77% had detections of hexavalent chromium with detectable concentrations ranging between 0.03 ppb and 1.87 ppb, with a median of 0.16 ppb based on data collected between April 2013 and June 2016. These concentrations are also well below the California drinking water standard for hexavalent chromium of 10 ppb as well as the federal and New York State drinking water standard for total chromium of 100 ppb.

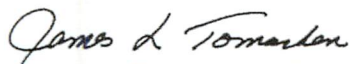
With regard to the concern about chromium impacting nearby surface waters, SCDHS staff collected a surface water sample from the west branch of Georgica Pond on November 3rd of this year. The results of the total chromium analysis are pending.

Given that the concentrations of hexavalent chromium that have been detected in Wainscott are consistent with concentrations that have been detected in other locations in Suffolk County and are lower than both the federal and state drinking water standard for total chromium, as well as the California drinking water standard for hexavalent chromium, we do not consider a groundwater investigation in the vicinity of the concrete mix facility to be warranted at this time. This conclusion may be revisited if new information becomes available.

The SCDHS will continue to work with the NYSDEC and the Suffolk County Water Authority to address groundwater contamination in Suffolk County and take appropriate actions necessary to protect county residents. Although not currently required by the federal or state government, the SCDHS plans to also continue our regular monitoring of public and private water supply wells in Suffolk County for hexavalent chromium.

Thank you for your letter and for bringing Mr. Kinsella's concerns to our attention.

Sincerely,



James L. Tomarken, MD, MPH, MBA, MSW
Commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Health Services

JLT/srg

cc: Carrie Meek Gallagher, Director Region 1, NYSDEC
James Gaughran, Chairman, Suffolk County Water Authority
Christina Capobianco, CPA, Deputy Commissioner, SCDHS
Walter Dawydiak, Jr., PE, JD, Director, Division of Environmental Quality, SCDHS
Simon Kinsella, Wainscott Resident



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