

Litigation update: WWW Ends PFAS Settlement Discussions, Refusing to Pay for Municipal Water Extensions

At a media conference yesterday, Plainfield Superintendent Cameron Van Wyngarden and Algoma Supervisor Kevin Green, along with their attorney, announced Wolverine World Wide has ended settlement discussions with the townships – leaving virtually no chance to extend municipal drinking water in the coming year.

After nine months of negotiations, municipal attorney Douglas Van Essen advised both township boards that WWW will not voluntarily pay to extend Plainfield's municipal water to areas contaminated with PFAS from decades of its waste disposal practices – unless the chemical's manufacturer, 3M, contributes to the cost.

Wolverine's recent announcement again starts the clock on the lawsuit, meaning WWW will have until Dec. 21 to answer the original complaint. While WWW had maintained it hoped to hold 3M responsible for a portion of the costs, until last week, Wolverine had not conditioned its participation in a consent decree compelling it to provide the reimbursement for public costs incurred in extending municipal water lines and connecting homes affected by the PFAS contamination to those lines.

The townships will now explore all avenues open to them to hold Wolverine accountable for its actions and expects a conference with the federal court during the first quarter of 2019. The Township will continue to keep residents updated through Facebook, the website and weekly newsletters. If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to comments@plainfieldmi.org. For more information, click [here](#).

North Kent Sewer Authority

As the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) continues its investigation into PFAS contamination, they have asked municipal sewer treatment plants to test for PFAS in their sewer discharge. Municipal sewer treatment plants are designed to break down waste and filter out certain contaminants before discharging water back into the environment, but most are not equipped to deal with emerging contaminants like PFAS, which require a very different treatment process.

Plainfield Township is a member community of the North Kent Sewer Authority (NKSA) – a 5-community effort that began operating its own sewer treatment plant 10 years ago along with the neighboring communities of Alpine, Cannon and Courtland Townships along with the City of Rockford. The sewer treatment plant was designed with a state-of-the-art microfiltration process

and all water is UV treated for viruses and pathogens before discharging into the Grand River. However, as cutting-edge as this technology may be, it cannot filter out PFAS compounds.

To address the concerns of PFAS contamination, NKSA staff has tested various locations within the sewer collection system to determine PFAS source points. NKSA determined a handful of contributors and has worked with area manufacturers to identify and eliminate PFAS contributions in their waste stream. This, in combination with the newly installed GAC filtration in the Plainfield water plant, has greatly reduced the PFAS levels reaching the sewer treatment plant since testing began this past spring. NKSA is working with remaining identified contributors that will need to install PFAS filtration methods in their waste stream and is confident those sources will also be eliminated in the near future.

NKSA, along with its member communities, remains committed to finding and eliminating sources of PFAS contamination in our sewer system to ensure our system is environmentally responsible and protective of the Grand River watershed as well as Great Lakes water quality. You can learn more about the North Kent Sewer Authority on their website, <http://www.nksa.us/>.