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Olympic View Water and Sewer District Issues Intent to Sue Edmonds School District Over PFAS Pollution at Madrona School

Citizen Suit Alleges Violations of Safe Drinking Water Act and Washington State’s Non-Endangerment Standard for Underground Injection Control Wells

Edmonds, WA –Olympic View Water and Sewer District (OVWSD) has issued a Notice of Intent to Sue to the Edmonds School District to protect the drinking water aquifer that is threatened by PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) pollution at the Madrona School. This legal action cites violations of environmental laws and follows the school district’s inaction in addressing the pollution.

A Citizen Suit is a legal mechanism that allows individuals or entities to sue for the enforcement of environmental laws, when corporations and government bodies fail to comply.

The Notice of Intent provides the Edmonds School District with 60 days to achieve compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act and Washington State’s Underground Injection Control (UIC) well program. If compliance is not achieved within this period, OVWSD intends to file a formal lawsuit under the Citizen Suit provisions.

“The Edmonds School District has known about the PFAS issue at Madrona School since 2023 but has failed to take adequate measures to prevent these contaminants from entering the school’s UIC wells,” said Bob Danson, General Manager of OVWSD. ***“Our efforts to work collaboratively with the district were met with continued resistance, leaving us no choice but to pursue legal action to protect the public’s drinking water.”***

Danson emphasized that OVWSD’s drinking water remains safe, as has been confirmed by testing. However, PFAS contamination at Madrona School, found in soil and stormwater runoff, poses a future risk to the district’s water source.

The Madrona School Replacement Project was completed by the Edmonds School District in and around 2018. The Project included the installation of a new stormwater management system, which collects water at catch basins and then conveys this stormwater to sixteen on-site UIC wells.

The OVWSD opposed the installation of the UIC wells because Madrona School's stormwater wells drain into the ground above the Deer Creek aquifer and risks contaminating the water supply. The UIC wells were installed by the Edmonds School District over OVWSD's objection.

PFAS, referred to as forever chemicals, a large family of chemicals used since the 1950s, are found in various consumer products, including food packaging, outdoor clothing, and non-stick cookware. These chemicals are also present in certain firefighting foams used by the U.S. military, airports, and by local fire departments. PFAS are linked to significant health risks, including developmental issues in children, immune system impacts, and increased cancer risks.

OVWSD first identified unsafe PFAS levels in stormwater samples from the Madrona School site in 2022. OVWSD took prompt action to address the issue with the Edmonds School District and Washington State Department of Ecology. OVWSD has continued to press for prompt action to remediate the contamination. The School District's subsequent sampling in 2023 and 2024 continued to show unsafe PFAS concentrations. Communications from the Washington Department of Ecology in 2024 to investigate the source of the PFAS contamination has resulted in limited action by the school and has left the problem unresolved.

In 2024, further soil sampling within Madrona School's bioretention planters— which collect stormwater before directing it to UIC wells— further revealed unsafe PFAS concentrations in the soil. The Department of Ecology has since issued a corrective action request, recommending soil removal and replacement, additional sampling, and "first flush" monitoring in fall 2025.

Comprehensive testing, including groundwater testing, is essential to fully identify the PFAS problem and its source at Madrona School.

“The Edmonds School District must take immediate steps to comply with state and federal regulations designed to protect public health and drinking water,” said Danson.

To Learn more, visit the Washington Department of Health PFAS page:

[PFAS | Washington State Department of Health.](#)

To learn what OVWSD is doing to safeguard your drinking water from PFAS visit:

<https://olympicviewwater.com/info-and-resources/pfas-information/>

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