

# my EDMONDS NEWS

## Water district says it intends to sue over chemicals found in Edmonds school's stormwater system

by Rick Sinnett Posted: May 29, 2025



Madrona K-8

School sits on top of the Deer Creek Aquifer, the source of the area's drinking water. (Photo courtesy of the Edmonds School District.)

*Updated May 30 with a response from the Edmonds School District.*

The Olympic View Water and Sewer District has issued a letter of intent to sue the Edmonds School District over chemicals found in the stormwater system at Edmonds' Madrona K-8 School.

Citing the federal Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, the water and sewer district sent a letter May 20 to District Superintendent Rebecca Miner. The letter stated that the district

isn't addressing the PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), also known as forever chemicals, found in the Madrona K-8 school stormwater system injection wells in October 2022.

The [Safe Drinking Water Act](#) (SDWA) was created to protect drinking water, encompassing all waters, whether above ground or underground sources that are currently or potentially designed for drinking use.

It authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish minimum standards to protect tap water. Further, the SDWA requires all owners or operators of public water systems to comply with the health-related standards.

The EPA is authorized to establish [minimum standards](#) for state programs to protect underground drinking water from contamination resulting from the underground injection of fluids, such as rainwater and street runoff.

Edmonds School District (ESD) spokesperson Cutis Campbell said that the district disagrees, and has been following the guidelines set by the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE), and are properly addressing the issue.

"We have received and reviewed the Olympic View Water and Sewer District's notice regarding PFAS at the Madrona K-8 School," Campbell said. "The Edmonds School District disagrees with many of the allegations outlined in the notice, including any assertion that the District is in violation of clean water standards."

Campbell stated that while some stormwater samples taken at the site have indicated elevated levels of PFAS, it is essential to clarify that no samples have shown any impact on groundwater, let alone drinking water sources.

"The District has been actively addressing the PFAS concerns identified in a limited area of soil, which appears to have been introduced during school construction," Campbell said. "Since fall 2024, we have been conducting additional environmental sampling under the direction of the Washington State Department of Ecology."

Campbell said the district plans to take further corrective steps this summer, after the school year ends, including removing the likely source of PFAS contamination from the site.

"We remain committed to fully complying with Ecology's direction, maintaining transparency, and sharing all sampling data and reports with Olympic View Water and Sewer District throughout this process," Campbell said.

In an interview before the lawsuit was announced, Campell said that “because DOE is the regulatory agency with jurisdiction, we are working with them to address this issue, and ESD is conducting the sampling as directed by DOE,” Campbell said. “ESD provides Olympic View Water and Sewer District with a copy of every document we submit to DOE, including sample results, and we will continue to do so.”

Campbell said that when stormwater stays on site and is not discharged to the City of Edmonds, the DOE is the permitting agency and has jurisdiction. Further, OVWSD has access to the Madrona campus as necessary to maintain the utilities “consistent with its jurisdiction over water and sewer services.”

In response to the PFAS found in the stormwater at Madrona, the district is working with a third-party consultant, Shannon and Wilson, and has submitted a sampling plan that DOE approved in November 2024, Campbell said.

“Shannon and Wilson have been conducting Phase 1-3 testing on site throughout the rainy season,” Campbell said. “As these sample data come in, the data will inform DOE’s decisions regarding further steps to address PFAS at the Madrona school.”

The injection well sites have been a point of tension between the district and OVWSD since [October 2016](#), when then-Olympic View General Manager Lynne Danielson voiced concerns to *My Edmonds News* concerning the depth of the stormwater wells.

Danielson explained that the Madrona site sits near the five-year and 10-year areas of influence zones, named after the length of time it takes for water to penetrate the ground and reach a water source. In this instance, the water source is Deer Creek.

Typically, the water injection sites under OVWSD’s purview are 20 feet deep. But the ones at Madrona are 80-100 feet deep, Danielson said, placing potentially contaminated water closer to groundwater and reducing the effectiveness of the filtering.

In a [2024 interview](#), OVWSD General Manager Bob Danson stated that the injection sites at Madrona bypass an 80-foot-thick protective till layer, discharging directly into the sands above the aquifer.

An interlocal agreement was signed in 2017 involving OVWSD, the Edmonds School District and the City of Edmonds, allowing for construction of the new Madrona campus without a separate contract between the school district and OVWSD.

However, the City of Edmonds required an agreement between the water and school districts before the school would be issued a certificate of occupancy.

In October 2022, OVWSD collected water samples from two of the site's 16 wells, which revealed the presence of PFAS at the stormwater injection sites. DOE addressed this issue in an [August 2024](#) letter to the district.

The Edmonds School District said that OVWSD did not have permission to be on the Madrona campus, and they took the samples without permission or oversight from the district.