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## **NEW FEATURES: INTERACTIVE WEBSITE WITH LOCAL WATER DATA UPDATED –**

### **NY Airports and Military Fire Training Sites Certified to Store PFOS**

#### **New Yorkers Find Out “[What’s In My Water?](#)”**

(*New York*) – Today, NYPIRG released an updated online water portfolio project, [What’s In My Water?](#), to give all New Yorkers an interactive, easy to navigate resource about the state of their drinking water. The 2018 update highlights the locations of AFFF-Certified Airports and Military Fire Training Sites, which have been linked to the contamination of groundwater and nearby drinking water supplies by PFOS.

The online tool also includes information on the presence of contaminants found through state and federal laboratory testing, and the location and nature of some potential threats to local drinking water (searchable by zip code and maps). The 2018 update includes Brownfield data, information on lead in drinking water, and information on private water well testing.

Aqueous Film Forming Foams (AFFF) have been in use since the mid-1960s by the military, airports, and in other settings to extinguish petroleum fires. Fluorinated chemicals including PFOS are key ingredients of AFFF, and have contaminated water supplies near sites where it is used. Poly- and perfluorinated alkyl substances (PFASs), the family of chemicals that PFOS belongs to, are highly toxic man-made chemicals. Not all firefighting foam contains PFASs.

Having been largely phased out of production, PFOS is considered a “legacy” contaminant and has been de-prioritized by new federal EPA rulemaking.<sup>1</sup> Yet Plattsburgh and New Windsor, New York provide good examples of why PFAS monitoring remains important. Elevated PFAS contamination was recently discovered in groundwater near the site of the Plattsburgh Air Force Base, which was closed over 20 years ago on September 25, 1995.<sup>2</sup> On top of that, there are millions of gallons of AFFF stockpiled around the nation, and which are in use in places like Stewart Air Base in New Windsor.

“Clean water is among our most precious resources. While federal and state laws are supposed to protect us, we know that drinking water sources are under constant threat. With this 2018 update, we know how important it is for New Yorkers to remain vigilant about the state of their drinking water, particularly as communities in Flint, Michigan and right here in Hoosick Falls, Newburgh, on Long Island, and elsewhere in the state continue to fight for their right to safe drinking water,” said Megan Ahearn, NYPIRG Program Director.

Airports with regularly scheduled passenger flights are required to keep AFFF supplies on site. There are 24 in New York. The military has also uses AFFF in fire and crash trainings conducted at hundreds of sites throughout the United States, including 10 in New York. Studies have linked PFAS exposure to a number of adverse health effects, including testicular and kidney cancers, liver malfunction, hypothyroidism, high cholesterol, low birth weight, obesity, reduced hormone levels and delayed puberty.<sup>3</sup>

Please visit *What’s In My Water?* at <http://nypirg.org/whatsinmywater/>.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lipton, E., «Why Has the E.P.A. Shifted on Toxic Chemicals? An Industry Insider Helps Call the Shots,” *The New York Times*, October, 21, 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/21/us/trump-epa-chemicals-regulations.html? r=0>

<sup>2</sup> Hirsch, Z., “[Air Force finds chemicals in groundwater near former Plattsburgh base](https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/30828/20160129/air-force-finds-chemicals-in-groundwater-near-former-plattsburgh-base),” North Country Public Radio, January 29, 2016. <https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/30828/20160129/air-force-finds-chemicals-in-groundwater-near-former-plattsburgh-base>.

<sup>3</sup> Blum A et al. The Madrid Statement on Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs). *Environmental Health Perspectives* May 2015; 123(5): A107 – A111. <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/1509934/>