TESTING *for* PEASE

09/26/2018

MY PERSONAL STORY:

My name is Andrea Amico and I live in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. PFAS water contamination is a very personal issue for me. My husband and I moved to the beautiful seacoast part of New Hampshire in 2007 when my husband took a job at the Pease International Tradeport. Pease was a former Air Force Base that was open from 1956 to 1990. After closing in 1990, it was then redeveloped into an International Tradeport that is now home to more than 200 businesses and brings ~ 10,000 people a day there for work, college, healthcare, childcare, etc.

My husband and I were blessed with our first child in 2011 and it was a hard decision to pick the right daycare setting to send our daughter. I did not have the option to stay home with my daughter full time and my husband and I did the next best thing and found her a loving and caring daycare center. After months on the waiting list, we were thrilled to learn of an opening at a beautiful, new daycare center on Pease. The daycare was built in 2010 and it was right next door to my husband's work on Pease. It was a beautiful facility with bright colored classrooms and loving teachers. My husband could see the window of my daughter's classroom from his office and would stop by on his lunch break to feed her a bottle or take her for a walk. And in 2013, we were blessed with our second child, a son, who we also enrolled in the same daycare center on Pease right next door to my husband's work. Both of my children started daycare on Pease at the young age of 12 weeks old. When looking into child care facilities, we asked many questions of the daycare center (are your teachers experienced, what is your curriculum, what are your safety policies), but NEVER did it cross our minds that we had to question the quality of the water at the picture perfect daycare center my children were attending.

You can imagine the feeling of my heart sinking when I read in a local newspaper article on the Friday before Memorial Day weekend in May of 2014 that high levels of contaminants had been found in one of the Pease wells that supplies drinking water to the tradeport and was shut down. I immediately thought of my husband and two small children that were on Pease for work and daycare every day and drinking the water.

When I first read the article, PFAS was being referred to as PFCs. I had never heard of these chemicals prior to May 2014, but I quickly learned that there were many areas of concern related to PFAS exposure. I learned that PFAS are extremely persistent in the environment and don't break down or attenuate over time like other contaminants. I

learned that they bio accumulate in the body and have half very long half-lives, some taking decades to leave the body. And I also learned that they are associated with multiple adverse health effects that impact many systems of the body such as different types of cancers, impaired immune function in children, elevated cholesterol, fertility issues, and more. And that they cross the placenta to unborn children and can be passed to infants through breast milk which means future generations are at risk for the contamination we are facing today.

I started my advocacy journey 4 years ago with the initial intention of advocating for blood testing for my family and wanting to better understand their exposure to PFAS at Pease. My work quickly evolved into advocating for the entire Pease community (both past and present) to better understand the long term health impacts given this significant environmental exposure. I am a co-founder of a community action group called Testing for Pease with two other mothers, Alayna Davis and Michelle Dalton. Our role as community leaders has evolved in to working with other impacted community leaders across the nation by advocating on behalf of millions of Americans that have been unknowingly exposed to contaminated drinking water and now need more action and answers. As a community leader and advocate for impacted communities, I feel strongly that we must help impacted communities that are suffering now, we must learn more about the long term health impacts of PFAS, and we must advocate strongly for more protective measures to be put in place to prevent any other families from being exposed to harmful contaminants in drinking water in the future.

Since 2014, I have learned so much more about the chemistry, remediation, and possible health effects of PFAS. In 2015, my family participated in the PFAS blood testing program offered by NH DHHS and their PFAS levels were found to be elevated. My 7 year old daughter has the highest level of PFAS in her blood in our family. My children were exposed to highly contaminated water at daycare at an early and critical stage of their development. I will never stop worrying about the health of my children and I will forever live with the guilt that I unknowingly sent them to a daycare where they drank contaminated water. At times, the worry and guilt is consuming and I don't sleep much at night. However, I have tried really hard to channel this negative energy into something positive through my advocacy work because I feel strongly that families like mine deserve access to blood testing, medical monitoring, health study opportunities, clean water, remediation to remove these chemicals from the environment, and more answers to what the long term health impacts are given PFAS exposure. It is critical we learn from this very important public health crisis and do everything in our power to prevent another opportunity for so many Americans to be exposed to harmful contaminants in their drinking water.

THE PEASE STORY:

Being one of the first Department of Defense (DoD) sites to discover PFAS drinking water contamination, the Pease community has been a leader on many fronts and has been blazing a new trail in how to respond to this growing crisis around our nation. Through strong community organization, collaboration with several government agencies, and progressive leadership from the New Hampshire Congressional

Delegation, the Pease community has been offered a PFAS blood testing program to exposed community members, have treatment on drinking water wells & ongoing ground water treatment, and are currently working with ATSDR through the Pease CAP to coordinate a health study at Pease and a multi-site PFAS health study around the nation. We are extremely thankful to Senator Hassan and Senator Shaheen for their close collaboration with the impacted members of the community, the unprecedented legislation to help impacted communities, and their fierce leadership in addressing PFAS from the beginning of the discovery of the contamination at Pease. Senator Hassan was Governor of New Hampshire when the PFAS contamination was discovered at Pease and allowed for an open blood testing program of all impacted community members at Pease that started in 2015. She also re-opened the blood testing program at the community's request in 2016 when more community members were showing interest in participation after high levels of PFAS were found in the blood of the Pease community. Senator Hassan has sent several letters on behalf of the impacted community to federal agencies advocating for more action from the federal government for communities impacted by PFAS contamination. She also cosponsored legislation (introduced by Senators Schumer and Gillibrand) to require the EPA develop a maximum contaminant level for perfluorinated compounds (including PFOA and PFOS), 1,4 dioxane, and perchlorate in public water systems across America within two years of the bill's enactment. Senator Shaheen has also written several letters to federal agencies on behalf of the Pease community and coordinated a meeting with the Pease community and the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, John Henderson. She has been instrumental in introducing legislation through the NDAA that mandates DoD to fund a PFAS health study at Pease, exposure assessments at eight DoD sites across the country, and a multi-site PFAS health study across the nation. Senator Shaheen was also critical in appropriating the resources to fund the studies for ATSDR to do this very important work. She has also introduced legislation on a PFAS Registry Act (supported by Senator Hassan), that directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a registry to ensure that members of the Armed Forces who may have been exposed to PFAS on military installations receive information regarding such exposure for Veterans as this is a critical population that needs more attention and that we can learn from their PFAS exposure. Senator Hassan and Senator Shaheen have worked very hard from early on when the PFAS was discovered at Pease and our community is extremely grateful for their support, hard work, and continued leadership on this very important issue.

As a result of a strict order issued by the EPA in July of 2015, The Air Force has spent millions of dollars at Pease to investigate the PFAS contamination and take aggressive remediation action. Pease currently has two large Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) vessels on two of the drinking water wells with plans to add GAC and resin technology to the drinking water wells in the near future. The Air Force has also installed a ground water treatment system at the firefighting training area on Pease where large amounts of AFFF were released for training purposes and have very high levels of PFAS detected in the groundwater and soil. There is also ongoing construction of another groundwater treatment system in the airfield at Pease being coordinated and funded by the Air Force.

THE NATIONAL STORY:

The progressive work being done at Pease is not the same story that is playing out at other PFAS impacted communities across the nation. Multiple communities have discovered their contamination in the last few years, but their calls for blood testing, filtration, remediation, medical monitoring, and answers to health questions and concerns go unanswered by their government officials. In the absence of a consistent and coordinated approach from the federal government, states are taking different approaches to address this public health crisis. Without federal leadership, states are scrambling to find the resources to investigate PFAS contamination and to provide remediation to impacted sites. Some states take more protective measures to lower the acceptable levels for PFOA & PFOS than the current EPA health advisories (i.e. Vermont, New Jersey) and other states are including more than 2 PFAS in their total acceptable PFAS levels in drinking water (i.e Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont). Although the source of the PFAS contamination at several communities across the nation vary from DoD sites, chemical manufacturers, tanneries, and other industrial sites, the impacted communities wants and needs are very similar.

The need for the federal government to be the leaders in addressing the contamination is now. Although impacted communities are only recently discovering their contamination, the reality is that most communities have had ongoing exposure for decades and are dealing with the consequences of their exposure. Impacted communities cannot wait any longer for inaction and a disjointed effort from our government and instead need a consistent and coordinated effort at the federal level to tackle this growing and concerning public health issue.

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES:

According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), PFAS water contamination is estimated to be impacting 110 millions of Americans across the nation. We must not lose perspective that these impacted communities are not just a dot on the map and remember that they are real people with families, and the consequences of the contamination is very personal and life changing.

A National PFAS Contamination Coalition formed in June 2017 after a successful and unprecedented national PFAS conference at Northeastern University in Boston that brought together scientists, academics, impacted community leaders, environmental lawyers, physicians, government officials, journalists, and more to address the growing PFAS issue in our country. The National PFAS Contamination Coalition has held monthly calls and webinars to bring community leaders across the nation together to collaborate, learn from each other's stories, stream line efforts, share best practices, and develop a coordinated plan at a national level to get more action.

Challenges faced by impacted communities:

- PFAS are presumed safe until proven toxic and ongoing exposure continues
- Lack of federal health advisories for all PFAS

- Current EPA Lifetime Health Advisories (LHAs) for PFOS & PFOA are too high and not protective of public health and sensitive populations (infants, children, already exposed populations)
- Lack of health and toxicology data for all PFAS
- Multiple health effects impacting many systems in the body associated with PFAS exposure
- Communities should not be financially responsible for the cost of alternative water supply, remediation, filtration, blood testing, medical monitoring, etc
- Replacement PFAS are replacing “one evil with another”
- Limited labs capable of standardized testing of water and blood means testing is not easily accessible, time consuming, and expensive
- Cost of PFAS is more than just remediation/filtration and has significant economic consequences on individuals, businesses, and our entire society (i.e. property values decreased; businesses lack the ability to attract/retain talented employees and customers; chronic illness reduces employee attendance & productivity and drives up healthcare costs)
- Chronic illness as a result of PFAS exposure result in loss of work/wages; loss of happiness; loss of productivity; loss of life
- PFAS cross the placenta and pass through breast milk indicating future generations will be impacted by PFAS contamination
- Additional expenses related to PFAS exposure that are burdening community members are medical bills; bottled water; home filtration systems; diagnostic testing; community organizing/operating costs
- Communities are often not seen as stakeholders that deserve a seat at the table for important discussions and critical decisions
- Lack of transparency from government agencies
- Lack of funding causes roadblocks in research, remediation, and making decisions for public safety at state/federal level
- Data is technical and not easily understood
- Inconsistent messaging from government agencies re: health effects, blood testing, and medical monitoring that downplays risks
- Inconsistent responses to contamination at local, state, and federal level creates community confusion, uncertainty, and mistrust
- Difficulty streamlining communication between multiple goverment agencies and community
- PFAS are unregulated contaminants which means communities continue to be exposed to multiple PFAS (most without any health or toxilogical data)
- Impacted communities worry about adverse health effects, safety/quality of their water, lost property values, chronic health issues, financial burden, how to monitor health, lack of accessible labs, lack of government guidance, lack of accountability from responsible parties

COMMUNITY CALLS FOR ACTION:

- Establish MCL of 1 ppt for all PFAS

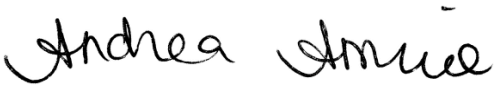
- Classify PFAS as hazardous substance
- Treat PFAS as a class/family and regulate them together and not one compound at a time
- Improve lab analytical methods to test for many PFAS in water and blood and make those more accessible nationwide
- Prioritize public health and not chemicals when making critical regulatory decisions
- Improve response time on taking meaningful action
- Value community members as critical stakeholders by including us in meetings and ask for our input on important decisions – “Nothing about us without us”
- Provide more funding to states to allow for more testing and community response
- Do not give into industry and political pressure when making important decisions that impact public health. The protection of public health should be the top priority of our government.
- Work with DoD to find non fluorinated firefighting foam alternatives and to completely phase out the use of fluorinated foams.
- Do not allow the introduction of any new PFAS into production due to the large number already in production/environment with limited data
- Conduct another round of UCMR testing that includes more communities, a greater number of PFAS to test for with lower detection limits to provide a more accurate picture of the PFAS contamination picture nationwide
- Be honest and fully transparent in all the action steps taken to address PFAS contamination

CONCLUSION:

The federal government must take swift and protective action against all PFAS and not just a couple chemicals within this class. The government must stop giving PFAS the benefit of the doubt and instead give public health the benefit of the doubt. It is known that some of the chemicals in this class of PFAS cause harm to human health and therefore the government should not allow these chemicals to be in the products, environment, and drinking water of millions of Americans. Communities need a consistent and coordinated action plan from federal agencies to address PFAS contamination and we need action now. It is critical the federal government take a leadership role by lowering the standard for all PFAS to 1 ppt, prioritize health & toxicological studies on PFAS to advance the science, allocate resources for ongoing investigations & remediation efforts, and hold the polluters responsible for their actions. Impacted communities have suffered enough by being exposed to harmful contamination in their drinking water and the burden to pay for clean water, remediation, filtration, blood testing, medical monitoring, and health related expenses should not fall on the communities, too. Community members have already "paid" enough by unknowingly and to no fault of their own being exposed to these harmful contaminants and it is time for the government to step up, take control, and implement meaningful action in the best interest of public health and not in the interest of the polluters. Impacted communities cannot even begin to compete with the billion dollar budgets and

extensive legal teams of the responsible parties such as DoD and industry representatives that use and manufacture these chemicals. Instead we rely heavily on our government agencies charged with protecting public health and the environment to take action that put our best interests first. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at the Senate Subcommittee hearing and to provide this written statement for the record.

Sincerely,



Andrea Amico
Testing for Pease, Cofounder