

City of Dillingham, Alaska

Legislative Action Plan

FY2023

PFAS Contamination

Background: In 2019, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) conducted a drinking water well sampling at and adjacent to the Dillingham Airport and detected per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) above DEC action levels.

The contaminants are believed to have originated from the historic use of Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) at various locations at the Dillingham Airport. Two Department of Transportation & Public Facilities led follow-up sampling events were conducted in 2019 to investigate the entire area around the Dillingham airport for PFAS compounds. All well owners exceeding their respective Action Level (n = 7) have been contacted and provided an alternative water source.

Because PFAS are persistent in the environment and soluble in water, large plumes of groundwater contamination can form where these compounds have been released. When releases occur in areas served by private or public drinking water wells, the well water is susceptible to contamination. When PFAS contamination is found in the environment, the responsible party must evaluate the extent of the contamination in the soil and groundwater, determine whether and to what extent drinking water supplies are impacted, provide treatment or alternative water if action levels are exceeded, and begin cleanup with DEC's oversight. The responsible party is typically the entity that caused the release or the landowner where the release occurred.

Sources: AK Department of Environmental Conservation, AK Department of Transportation

Goal: **Development of a Safe and Sustainable Long-term Alternate Potable Water Source/Delivery System for the area of the City impacted by PFAS Contaminants.**

Bristol Bay Watershed

Background: Bristol Bay is located in the Southeast corner of the Bering Sea in Alaska. It has long-played a vital role in sustaining residents and visitors who depend on a subsistence way of life to ensure food security and stay connected to their cultural identities.

Bristol Bay sockeye salmon begin their lives in the pristine tributaries and lakes of the region. Here the fingerling salmon spend the first year of their five-year life cycle before migrating out to sea. The sockeye salmon spend four years in the cold and clean waters of the Bering Sea and North Pacific. Completing their life cycle, the sockeye salmon migrate back to the rivers of their origin.

In 1884, Commercial Fishing began in Bristol Bay, when the first cannery went into operation on the Nushagak River. Today, Bristol Bay is home to the largest sockeye salmon run in the world. The 2022 inshore Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was a record with 79 million fish returning. Inshore harvest was 43.6 million sockeye. Wild sockeye salmon from Bristol Bay is enjoyed by consumers worldwide.

Sources: NOAA Fisheries, AK Fish & Game, Anchorage Museum, Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association

Goal: **Protect the Bristol Bay watershed's rivers, streams, and wetlands that support the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery and a subsistence-based way of life that has sustained Alaska Native communities for millennia.**