

## **Is our water supply as safe as the citizens of Sebastopol deserve?**

Citizens deserve a “status report” that includes water safety data. The health consequences of our population drinking contaminated water would be an epic failure of the trust we put in our city employees and our elected officials.

Historically, the city and past city councils have not managed the water and wastewater enterprises with great diligence. For 20 years the city and past city councils were illegally siphoning money from the water rate payers to fund general government activities. This starved the water and sewer operation of needed funds to update infrastructure, potentially including treating our water to remove contaminants such as arsenic.

The Public Works status report describes issues with contamination of the water in three out of four of our wells. Arsenic is the most prevalent problem; the presence of tetrachloroethylene may be the most alarming but appears to be under control using the carbon filter on that well. It does appear, past city councils did allow “dry cleaning fluids” to be in our water supply for three years before addressing the problem.

There is a long history of Arsenic in the water supply. Beginning in 2009 the city water quality report documented higher than allowable levels of arsenic contamination in 2008 water samples. The 2009 report had a footnote that disclosed a compliance order from the State Department of Public Health that was issued. The solution stated in a report at the time was to take more samples and average the results.

Still for years individual samples continued to exceed the maximum allowable arsenic levels. In 2013 CEQUA disclosed that the arsenic problem had been ongoing and unresolved since 2007. CEQUA directed the city to develop a water treatment solution.

This all began in 2007 and continued in 2008 & 2009. There are no reports for 2010-2012. Reports on the city website show water samples exceeded the maximum arsenic levels by almost 4 times maximum in 2013, 2014, 2015. Levels were elevated in 2016 and again in 2022. (See addendum).

It would be comforting to know the problem is finally resolved. However, reports from the last two years cast doubt. The 2022 report had samples that again exceed the maximum allowable levels based on federal standards.



**CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT  
for Calendar Year 2022  
City of Sebastopol Municipal Water System**

**TABLE 4 - DETECTION OF CONTAMINANTS WITH A PRIMARY DRINKING WATER STANDARD**

Chemical or Constituent (and reporting units)	Sample Date	Level Detected	Range of Detections	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Typical Source of Contaminant
Radioactivity (Gross Alpha) (pCi/L)	Well 4 - 2020 Well 6 - 2016 Well 7 - 2016 Well 8 - 2016	.85	.44 - 1.85	15	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits.
Fluoride (ppm)	Well 4 - 2020 Well 6 - 2021 Well 7 - 2021 Well 8 - 2020	<0.1	<0.1	2	(4.0)	Erosion of natural deposits, water additive that promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
*Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2020 Well 6 - 2022 Well 7 - 2022 Well 8 - 2020	4.3	ND - 11	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.

On the surface the 2023 report shows improvement. But on closer examination only three of the four wells were sampled. Well 6 samples were not included in the report. Well 6 is one of the two wells with arsenic and the well targeted according to this status report for possible treatment for arsenic “if levels increase in the future.” If no data is reported from well 6, then what will be the criteria that triggers water treatment for arsenic?



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Chemical or Constituent (and reporting units)	Sample Date	Level Detected	Range of Detections	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Typical Source of Contaminant
Radioactivity (Gross Alpha) (pCi/L)	Well 4 - 2023 Well 7 - 2016 Well 8 - 2016	.51	.44 - .613	15	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits.
Fluoride (ppm)	Well 4 - 2023 Well 7 - 2021 Well 8 - 2023	<0.1	<0.1	2	(4.0)	Erosion of natural deposits, water additive that promotes strong teeth; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
*Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2023 Well 7 - 2023 Well 8 - 2023	4.0	0 - 5.8	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.

The rationale for allowing arsenic in the water is described in the footnote to the water quality reports which reads as follows”

***\*Arsenic: While your drinking water meets the federal and state standard for arsenic, it does contain low levels of arsenic. The arsenic standard balances the current understanding of arsenic’s possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water.***

Given that most residents of Peacetown are focused on better health it seems unlikely that they would be happy knowing we have arsenic levels up to and exceeding the maximum

allowed by the federal government. The wealthy can put in filtration systems to ensure clean water. Lower income individuals will have to take a chance and drink the water.

It appears there is a plan to treat the water. How much does it cost; how long would it take to implement? City council members representing Sebastopol's water users should be asking if the costs of removing the arsenic are offset by the risks of adverse health effects based on levels acceptable to our citizens and not just the Federal Government.

The city council is the board of directors of the Sebastopol water district. In addition to infrastructure, every member needs to review the history of the operations, including the decisions made by past councils and be attentive to ongoing issues such as water contamination, ongoing billing issues and ongoing financial issues.

**Addendum: Tetrachloroethylene Levels**

**TABLE 4 – DETECTION OF CONTAMINANTS WITH A PRIMARY DRINKING WATER STANDARD**

Chemical or Constituent (and reporting units)	Sample Date	Level Detected	Range of Detections	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Typical Source of Contaminant
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2017

Tetrachloroethylene	Well 4 - 2017 Well 6 - 2012 Well 7 - 2015 Well 8 - 2014	.0	0.0 - 0.0	5	(0)	Discharge from factories, dry cleaners, and auto shops (metal degreaser).
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2016

Tetrachloroethylene	Well 4 - (2016) Well 6 - (2012) Well 7 - (2011) Well 8 - (2014)	.0	0.0 - 0.0	5	(0)	Discharge from factories, dry cleaners, and auto shops (metal degreaser).
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2015

Tetrachloroethylene	Well 4 - (2015) Well 6 - (2012) Well 7 - (2011) Well 8 - (2014)	.0	0.0 - 1.6	5	(0)	Discharge from factories, dry cleaners, and auto shops (metal degreaser).
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2014

Tetrachloroethylene	Well 4 Monthly, Well 6 - (2012) Well 8 - (2008) Well 7 - (2011)	.039	0.0 - 1.6	5	(0)	Discharge from factories, dry cleaners, and auto shops (metal degreaser)
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2013

Tetrachloroethylene	Well 4 Monthly, Well 6 - (2012) Well 8 - (2008) Well 7 - (2011)	.19	0.0 - 0.72	5	(0)	Discharge from factories and dry cleaners.
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Addendum: Arsenic Levels

**TABLE 4 – DETECTION OF CONTAMINANTS WITH A PRIMARY DRINKING WATER STANDARD**

Chemical or Constituent (and reporting units)	Sample Date	Level Detected	Range of Detections	MCL	PHG (MCLG)	Typical Source of Contaminant
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2023

*Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2023 Well 7 - 2023 Well 8 - 2023	4.0	0 – 5.8	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2022

Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2016 Well 6 - 2017 Well 7 - 2017 Well 8 - 2017	3.1	<2.0 – 5.2	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2021

*Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2020 Well 4 - 2020 Well 6 - 2021 Well 7 - 2021 Well 8 - 2020	4.0	ND – 5.5	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2020

*Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2020 Well 6 - 2020 Well 7 - 2020 Well 8 - 2020	4.6	ND – 6.7	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2019

*Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2019 Well 6 - 2019 Well 7 - 2019 Well 8 - 2017	2.5	ND – 7.6	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2018

*Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2016 Well 6 - 2018 Well 7 - 2018 Well 8 - 2017	2.4	0.0 – 8.9	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2017

Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - 2016 Well 4 - 2016 Well 6 - 2017 Well 7 - 2017 Well 8 - 2017	3.1	<2.0 – 5.2	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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**TABLE 4 – DETECTION OF CONTAMINANTS WITH A PRIMARY DRINKING WATER STANDARD**

<b>Chemical or Constituent (and reporting units)</b>	<b>Sample Date</b>	<b>Level Detected</b>	<b>Range of Detections</b>	<b>MCL</b>	<b>PHG (MCLG)</b>	<b>Typical Source of Contaminant</b>
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2016

Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - (2013) Well 6 - (2015) Well 7 - (2015) Well 8 - (2014)	2.4	<2.0 - 11	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2015

Arsenic (ppb)	Well 4 - (2013) Well 6 - (2015) Well 7 - (2015) Well 8 - (2014)	2.7	<2.0 - 38.0	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2014

Arsenic (ppb)	Various in 2014 (Well 4 3/5/13)	3.9	<2.0 - 38.0	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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2013

Arsenic (ppb)	Various in 2013	3.87	<2.0 - 16.0	10	(0)	Erosion of natural deposits, runoff from orchards, glass and electronics production wastes.
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## Sebastopol Well 6 Pilot Test

2 Documents in Project

### Summary

<b>SCH Number</b>	2013078349
<b>Public Agency</b>	City of Sebastopol
<b>Document Title</b>	Sebastopol Well 6 Pilot Test
<b>Document Type</b>	NOE - Notice of Exemption
<b>Received</b>	7/29/2013
<b>Posted</b>	7/29/2013
<b>Document Description</b>	Water derived from the City's Well 6 contains arsenic at concentrations which have exceeded the MCL since 2007. Water supply from Well 6 is required by the City to meet water demand. Arsenic treatment is needed to maintain use of the well. The temporary demonstration/planning study will provide the information required to evaluate arsenic treatment options.