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**Sent:** 3/27/2018 7:57:34 PM  
**To:** Press [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group  
(FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=b293283291dc44e0b5d1c36be9281d8a-Press]  
**Subject:** Documentary on PFAS

**FOR RELEASE: 03/28/2018**

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## **Filmmakers Seek Help In Sounding Alarm Over Toxic PFAS In Drinking Water, To Show Small Communities How To Overcome Obstacles to Fixing The Problem**

DETROIT - Two Michigan independent filmmakers are seeking help in funding a documentary called *Bad Water. Small Town. Deaf Ears.* that will expose the widespread threat to health caused by a class of unregulated, toxic chemicals used to make a wide range of non-stick and stain-resistant products.

Studies have shown that some level the group of poly- and per-fluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are in the bloodstream of 98 percent of all Americans.

The PFAS typically are used in fire retardants, oil and water repellents, upholstery, water-resistant clothing, take-out containers and non-stick cookware, including Teflon and Scotchgard. PFAS particles do not biodegrade once in the environment. They can be transported by air and water both above and below ground and can accumulate in the bodies of animals and humans who are exposed.

Health effects of PFAS include higher rates of kidney and testicular cancer, higher cholesterol levels, suppressed immune systems and weakened antibody responses to vaccinations among children.

Filmmakers Victor Pytko and Ed Gardiner learned of the PFAS crises last year after Pytko's niece, a resident of Hoosick Falls, NY, discovered that her family's blood samples tested well over safety thresholds for the unregulated PFAS. One of the toxins, perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA, has been traced to a plant currently owned by the town's main employer, Saint Gobain Performance Plastics which bought the McCaffrey Street operation in one of a series of sales that go back to 1955.

Pytko and Gardiner interviewed Hoosick Falls officials and families who tell heart-rending stories of the effect the deadly chemicals has had their families. The filmmakers followed up with interviews with officials and residents of Oscoda, Mich., where PFAS contamination originates at sources associated with the closed Wurtsmith Air Force Base. A toxic plume from Wurtsmith threatens Lake Huron and water sources downstream.

To date, 14 Michigan communities have tested positive for PFAS in their water sources.

“Small communities nationwide just now are waking up to the fact they have been drinking contaminated water for years, putting them at high risk for deadly cancer and other diseases,” said Gardiner. “Testing for PFAS is relatively new and there is only a handful of labs that can do it, plus there is no real consensus on safe levels making it difficult for authorities to consider costly actions.”

The documentary will include interviews in Belmont and Rockwell, Mich. and Merrimack, NH., where footwear manufacturer Wolverine Worldwide and Saint Gobain operate respectively. The movie is expected to show how residents in the four communities educated themselves on the science, extracted facts and research data, and got elected officials and other authorities to listen and initiate remediation.

“Knowing what obstacles the residents faced, and how they overcame them, can serve as a play book for other communities facing similar situations,” said Pytko. “With the persistence of Hoosick Falls residents, the New York legislature passed a statewide \$2.5 billion clean water infrastructure bill last year,” he said.

To fund the movie, the filmmakers created a holding company called Less Than One LLC, that just kicked off a GoFundMe "crowdfunding" campaign to cover preproduction and planning costs for the documentary and an accompanying point source website.

Pytko said, “Almost certainly, you already have some of PFAS in your blood. We ask, if you care about your health and those you love, to help us raise the alarm so that all Americans can become aware of the crises and take positive steps to mitigate it.”

To learn more about the campaign and to make a contribution, click on <https://www.gofundme.com/BadWaterPart2>. The goal is \$50,000.

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*Less Than One, LLC is a holding company for the production of the documentary, “Bad Water. Small Town. Deaf Ears.” and an accompanying web site.*