



DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE

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Leana Hosea
By email: [REDACTED]@watershedinvestigations.com

Our ref: EIR2024/17996
22 October 2024

Dear Leana Hosea,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Results for PFAS (per-and poly fluoroalkyl substances) testing

Thank you for your request for information of 27 September 2024 about results for PFAS testing. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below.

Please can I put in an EIR request for the latest raw data the DWI has showing all the water companies results for PFAS tests?

If you could please share it in an excel sheet including the name of the water company, results for PFAS for raw water, treated water, the types of PFAS and the levels in ug/l, the dates and locations they were taken

We enclose a copy of the information you requested in two spreadsheets that are called:

- PFAS Treated.xlsx
- PFAS Untreated.xlsx

However, we are not disclosing the specific location of the samples under regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIRs which relates to information whose disclosure would adversely affect international relations, defence, national security or public safety.

Regulation 12(5)(a)

In this instance to specific part of this exception that is engaged is national security and in applying we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. We have also applied a presumption in favour of disclosure, as required by regulation 12(2) of the EIRs.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning PFSA testing. We understand that release of this information aids accountability and transparency in government.

However, on the other hand, there is a stronger public interest in withholding the information because release the specific location of a sampling point could result in an act of sabotage around the sampling point. Releasing information about the location of water testing sites, particularly for contaminants like PFAS, could expose sensitive data about the broader water supply system. Such infrastructure is classified as critical national infrastructure, meaning any vulnerability or attack could have serious implications for public health, security, and the economy. Detailed knowledge of where testing occurs may give malicious actors insight into weaknesses or gaps in the water supply chain, making it easier to disrupt the system through sabotage, contamination, or cyberattacks.

This regulation is engaged because the water infrastructure is critical to national security and we have therefore concluded that the location details of the samples should be withheld in the stronger interest of public safety.

Information disclosed in response to this EIRs request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

We attach Annex A, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you, and Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Judith Bibaud
DWI FOIA and EIR team
 [@defra.gov.uk](mailto:[redacted]@defra.gov.uk)

Annex A

Copyright

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Vanessa Drury, Head of Information Rights, via email at [\[REDACTED\]@defra.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@defra.gov.uk) and they will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure is on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted using the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>