

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2026

The Honorable Troy E. Meink
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary Meink:

We write to request that the Air Force provide a firm timeline for prompt funding and treatment of PFAS contamination in two municipal drinking water wells that serve the City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire – the Portsmouth well and the Collins well – before the City’s water system falls out of compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

Both wells draw from the same aquifer beneath the former Pease Air Force base that the Air Force has long known is contaminated with PFOA and PFOS. In June 2025, PFOS in the Portsmouth and Collins wells, and PFOA in the Portsmouth well averaged above the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) 4.0 ppt maximum contaminant level (MCL) for these chemicals. Together, the two wells supply approximately 1.3 million gallons of water a day – nearly a quarter of the community’s drinking water – with no alternative source if either is taken offline. The City has asked the Air Force in writing three times since 2023 to fund design and treatment for these wells, but the Air Force has responded only once, with no response to the two most recent requests (please find all four letters enclosed).

The Air Force’s obligation does not depend on the City’s compliance deadline. EPA has authority under Section 1431 of the SDWA to order any party, including a federal agency, to address contamination that endangers a drinking water source. In 2015, the EPA used this authority to order the Air Force to treat contamination from Pease, including the Haven well. In fact, the EPA stated in that same order that the Portsmouth and Collins wells were threatened by the same contamination. The Air Force has since funded treatment for the Haven, Harrison, and Smith wells (all in the same aquifer) but never for these two.

New Hampshire families should not have to wonder whether their drinking water is safe because the Air Force has not fulfilled its obligations to clean up PFAS contamination it caused. Treatment facilities to address PFAS contamination typically take about three years from design to construction, yet the City’s \$586,400 design-cost request from June 2025 remains unfunded more than a year later. Absent immediate action and funding, Portsmouth risks falling out of compliance with the EPA’s April 2029 deadline under the Safe Drinking Water Act for contamination the Air Force has never denied causing.

We respectfully request the Air Force immediately contact the City of Portsmouth and enter into negotiations on an agreement to fund the design and construction of a PFAS treatment facility for the Portsmouth and Collins wells. We also request written responses to the following questions by **September 29, 2026**:

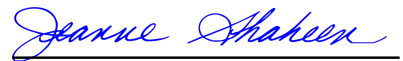
1. Has the Air Force completed the assessment it committed to conduct once EPA finalized the PFOA/PFOS limits, and if so, will it share the results and next steps with the City and our offices?
2. Will the Air Force commit to fund the design and construction of a treatment facility for the Portsmouth and Collins wells, including the City's \$586,400 design-phase request from June 2025, and by what date?
3. What is the Air Force's concrete plan, timeline, and point of contact for engaging directly with the City of Portsmouth on this issue?

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response.

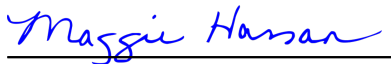
Sincerely,



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Maggie Goodlander
Member of Congress