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Olympic View Water and Sewer District Files Citizen Suit to Protect Drinking Water from PFAS Contamination at Madrona School

Edmonds, WA — The Olympic View Water and Sewer District (OVWSD) has filed a **Citizen Suit** against the Edmonds School District to protect the **Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer**—a vital source of drinking water for the community—from toxic **PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)** pollution linked to the Madrona School property. The lawsuit alleges violations of environmental law and follows nearly three years of the Edmonds School District’s (ESD) failure to credibly identify and eliminate the source of PFAS contamination on the site.

While the ESD engaged with OVWSD in discussions regarding this problem after receiving the Notice of Intent to Sue letter from OVWSD, the parties have not agreed yet on how to eliminate the risk of PFAS to the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer. OVWSD remains committed to working with the ESD to stop the immediate discharge of PFAS contaminated stormwater until a solution to the problem is achieved.

Water Supply Remains Safe—for Now

At present, OVWSD’s treated drinking water **remains safe** and compliant with all state and federal standards. However, the confirmed presence of PFAS at the Madrona School site represents a **clear and escalating threat** to groundwater quality in the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer. OVWSD’s actions today are necessary to prevent contamination of the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer and OVWSD’s treated drinking water.

“This is a public health issue,” said Bob Danson, OVWSD General Manager. “We are urging the ESD to take all necessary steps to stop discharging PFAS pollution at Madrona School and protect the aquifer as we enter the rainy season this fall.”

Background and Threat to Drinking Water

While OVWSD’s treated drinking water remains safe and compliant with all federal and state standards, testing has confirmed the presence of unsafe PFAS levels in stormwater and soils at the Madrona School site—posing a **significant risk** to the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer. PFAS, commonly called “forever chemicals,” are synthetic compounds used in products such as non-stick cookware, water-resistant clothing, and firefighting foam. These substances are persistent in

the environment and linked to serious health effects, including cancer, immune system damage, and developmental delays.

The risk arises from the **Madrona School Replacement Project**, completed in 2018 and 2019, when the Edmonds School District installed a stormwater system that directs runoff into **sixteen Underground Injection Control (UIC) wells**. These UIC wells discharge stormwater to the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer. OVWSD opposed the installation of these wells, warning of the risks they posed to future groundwater quality.

Since then, testing conducted by both the Edmonds School District and the OVWSD has shown **elevated PFAS levels in stormwater and in the soils above the aquifer** at the Madrona School.

State Oversight, School District Inaction

After first detecting PFAS chemicals in 2022 in stormwater, OVWSD alerted the ESD, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). OVWSD urged the ESD to investigate the source and stop discharging until the risk to the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer is eliminated. **Subsequent sampling in 2023 and 2024 confirmed ongoing PFAS pollution**. ESD took no action to stop further discharges of PFAS to groundwater.

In 2024, Ecology directed the ESD to investigate the source of contamination. ESD has yet to complete its investigation and conclusively identify a source of PFAS pollution.

In late 2024, **soil samples from Madrona School’s bioretention planters**—which collect and filter stormwater before it enters UIC wells—revealed additional **unsafe PFAS concentrations** in the soil. In response, the Department of Ecology issued **three corrective action orders**, recommending:

- Removal and replacement of some contaminated soils
- Limited additional stormwater and soil testing
- Limited monitoring during the rainy season in **fall 2025**

Ecology’s recommendations are not sufficient to prevent the risk to groundwater quality in the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer. Also, OVWSD is not aware of **any groundwater testing for PFAS** by the School District, a critical step in determining the potential impact of PFAS pollution on the Deer Creek Drinking Water Aquifer.

“Removing the soils is not sufficient to prevent PFAS pollution of the Deer Creek aquifer,” said Danson. “Additional investigation and testing to identify the sources must be done to fully address the problem and discharges to the UIC Wells must be stopped until this work is complete.”

To Learn more, visit the Washington Department of Health PFAS page:

[PFAS | Washington State Department of Health](#).

To learn what OVWSD is doing to safeguard your drinking water from PFAS visit:

<https://olympicviewwater.com/info-and-resources/pfas-information/>