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Airport Groundwater Results Below State of Michigan PFAS Health Advisory Level & Cleanup Criteria

Grand Rapids, Mich. – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) today shared with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the Kent County Health Department (KCHD), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the community, initial results of its multi-step evaluation process to assess the potential presence of polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) on airport property.

In its initial groundwater testing on GFIA property, all results show PFAS levels less than the State of Michigan cleanup criteria established for groundwater, as protection for drinking water. The State of Michigan's cleanup criteria for groundwater applies to two particular PFAS compounds, PFOA and PFOS, and is set at 70 parts per trillion (ppt) combined (<https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse>). The 70 ppt criteria also applies to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Lifetime Health Advisory (LHA) level.

In its multi-step evaluation process, the Ford Airport's initial groundwater test results show no detectable PFOS in any groundwater samples and detectable PFOA levels of no more than 54 ppt, all below the minimum State of Michigan standards.

GFIA's first of several evaluation steps for the identification of possible PFAS involved the deep drilling and complex sampling of five groundwater monitoring wells; each at a different site on airport property designed to assist with the overall investigation (a map of the specific sites is attached). Individual site results for PFAS ranges from 2.7 ppt to 54 ppt, with the highest levels of PFAS presence – and still below the State of Michigan criteria – at the well closest to the GFIA's former firefighting training area. The former firefighting training area was deactivated over 20 years ago.

Although test results are within acceptable standards, the Airport is demonstrating its commitment to the community by developing a plan to perform off-site groundwater testing, explained Jim Gill, A.A.E., IAP, Gerald R. Ford International Airport President & CEO. This plan will include some private residential wells, and those property owners will be contacted by the end of the month regarding next steps.

"We pride ourselves on being good neighbors and we are committed to going above and beyond regulatory requirements," said Gill. "To us, it is worth taking the extra steps on behalf of the community."

Other next steps will include analyzing results and defining future efforts in collaboration with MDEQ and KCHD.

“Based on the results that GFIA shared, we are confident that they have a plan in place and are moving forward in the best interest of the public,” Adam London, RS, MPA, Administrative Health Officer, Kent County Health Department. “KCHD will continue to monitor and provide our expertise and support, and we applaud the Airport’s efforts going above and beyond in its response.”

GFIA’s initial groundwater test results have been verified by Test America, an EPA-certified laboratory that conducted the analyses, as well as environmental engineering and science firm, LimnoTech, which developed the investigation plan and oversees the sampling.

“Learning about PFAS and its impacts has become an evolving national conversation, taking place at airports, military bases, and other facilities across the country,” said Gill. “Our commitment to environmental stewardship and our community has always been part of the airport’s foundation and that commitment continues to guide our work moving forward.”

The Ford Airport continues to share updates and information through its social media channels, as well as an FAQ page on its website: <http://www.grr.org/PDFs/PandC-QandA-052218.pdf>

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About GFIA

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport (GFIA) is the second busiest airport in Michigan. The Airport served over 2.8 million passengers in 2017 and over 7,000 travelers pass through GFIA each day. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport offers nonstop service to 24 major market destinations with more than 120 daily nonstop flights. The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. GFIA generates over \$3.1 billion in annual economic output throughout West Michigan, and employs over 2,000 people. For more information on GFIA visit: www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter: @FlyGRFord



Figure 3-3. Groundwater PFOS and PFOA Sample Results (ng/L).