



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

FACTS ABOUT: GAMBER GROUNDWATER INVESTIGATION

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATION GAMBER GROUNDWATER INVESTIGATION GAMBER/FINKSBURG, CARROLL COUNTY, MARYLAND MDE CASE NO. 2005-1155-CL

SITE LOCATION

The Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Oil Control Program (OCP) is investigating drinking water quality in private wells the vicinity of the Gamber/Finksburg community in Carroll County, Maryland. The area is primarily residential.

SITE HISTORY

On March 22, 2005, the Carroll County Health Department (CCHD) alerted MDE-OCP of elevated concentrations of MTBE in a supply well serving the Royal Farms Store at 4007 Sykesville Road. MTBE is a fuel additive commonly used to reduce carbon monoxide and ozone levels caused by auto emissions. There is no national regulatory standard for MTBE in drinking water. In 1997, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an advisory for MTBE based on taste and odor of 20 to 40 parts per billion (ppb). Although the EPA has not established a regulated Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for MTBE, the MDE-OCP has adopted an action level of 20 ppb. In August 2005, the CCHD provided written notification to residents in the area regarding the MTBE impact to drinking water wells.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTIGATIONS AND ACTIONS

After conducting field reconnaissance in the Gamber/Finksburg community, the MDE-OCP identified several potential sources in the area including: two active gas stations (High's Store, 3949 Sykesville Road; Royal Farms Store, 4007 Sykesville Road); a former gasoline facility (Discovery Carpet, 3950 Sykesville Road); and several other locations with petroleum underground storage tanks (Wantz Construction, 4004 Sykesville Road; the former Arnold Residence, 4118 Sykesville Road; former Gamber Fire Station, 4000 Sykesville Road; Raver property, 4015 Sykesville Road).

To date, the CCHD has sampled over 41 drinking water wells in the area. Based on the sample results, the MDE-OCP installed and maintained granular activated carbon (GAC) filtration systems on five private drinking water wells impacted by petroleum constituents, primarily MTBE and benzene. In October 2006, the MDE-OCP and the Maryland Environment Service (MES) installed six (6) groundwater monitoring wells in the Gamber study area to delineate the source(s) of the problem. In early 2008, due to a decreasing trend in contaminant levels, the MDE-OCP offered several impacted property owners the option of assuming responsibility for the GAC systems or having them removed. At several other properties where concentrations of petroleum constituents remained elevated, MDE-OCP continued to sample and maintain GAC filters as appropriate.



CURRENT STATUS

Based on sampling results, MDE continues to sample drinking water at two properties and maintains a GAC filter system at one of those properties. An annual groundwater sampling event is performed on the six monitoring wells at the site. Concentrations of petroleum constituents in exceedance of state or federal groundwater standards were detected in three of the six monitoring wells during the December 2019 event.

FUTURE UPDATES

- Postings available on www.mde.maryland.gov
- File available at MDE-OCP headquarters in Baltimore.

CONTACTS

- Oil Control Program: (410) 537-3442 or (800) 633-6101 x3442
- Carroll County Health Department: 410-876-2152

DISCLAIMER

The intent of this fact sheet is to provide the reader a summary of site events as they are contained within documents available to the MDE. To fully understand the site and surrounding environmental conditions, the MDE recommends that the reader review the case file, which can be requested through the Public Information Act. The inclusion of a person or company's name within this fact sheet is for informational purposes only and should not be considered a conclusion by the MDE on liability, involvement in a wrongful act, or contribution to environmental damage.