

NEWS from

Fontana Water Company

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City of Fontana, Fontana Water Company Officials Team Up to Seek Federal Support to Solve Groundwater Contamination in Fontana

Fontana, CA- Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren joined officials from Fontana Water Company in Washington, D.C., to seek more federal support in dealing with the massive perchlorate contamination of local underground water supplies in Fontana.

“We believe it is important that the federal government step up and help the people of Fontana,” said Mayor Warren. “There has been some level of support so far, but that needs to grow so that the people of Fontana don’t have to pay for cleaning up the pollution left by those who put the perchlorate in the ground in the first place.”

Fontana Water Company serves the City of Fontana and parts of Rialto and surrounding unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County.

Fontana Water Company and several other local water providers have been dealing with perchlorate contamination for almost 10 years now, and it has cost local residents millions of

dollars. For instance, the City of Rialto had to impose a hefty surcharge on its water bills to help pay for the increased costs.

Fontana Water Company currently has nine wells that can't be used because of perchlorate contamination. The water company is now constructing a new treatment facility to return one of those nine wells to use in the near future. That treatment system is partially funded by the Department of Defense. The water company previously restored two other wells utilizing the best available treatment technology—ion exchange treatment—to remove the perchlorate.

“These meetings in Washington have been very important and have helped us receive funding from the Department of Defense in the past,” said Robert Young, General Manager of Fontana Water Company. “But given the cutbacks in Washington, it is getting harder and harder to receive funding. That’s why it is critical that we show a solid base of support here at home; without local support, nothing will happen.”

The delegation from Fontana included Mayor Warren, water company Chief Executive Officer Michael Whitehead and Young. They met with California Senator Barbara Boxer and Congressman Gary Miller (R-Chino) as well as representatives from Senator Dianne Feinstein, Rep. Joe Baca (D-San Bernardino), Rep. David Drier (R-San Dimas) and Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Redlands).

In addition, the group met with Department of Defense officials in the Pentagon’s Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program/Environmental Security Technology Certification Program. Through this program the Department of Defense has partnered with Fontana Water Company to provide funding to construct a perchlorate removal treatment system in Fontana. Over the last sixty years the Department of Defense operated a variety of sites in and near Fontana where perchlorate was handled, stored, or disposed of.

Two key agenda items for the meetings were: building support for Department of Defense participation in additional treatment projects and getting the US EPA to take a more direct role in solving the perchlorate problem confronting Fontana.

The US EPA, as well as state agencies, has been very active in scrutinizing perchlorate contamination in Rialto and Colton, but has virtually ignored the perchlorate in Fontana's water supplies.

"It's important that the City of Fontana stand up for our residents on this issue," said Mayor Warren. "We didn't cause the pollution, there is no reason the residents should have to pay for it. And there is no reason Fontana shouldn't get the same action from the EPA and the state that other local cities are getting."

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