

April 27, 2023

Anne Vogel, Director of Ohio EPA
U.S. Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing and Critical Materials
Answers for Questions for the Record

The Honorable Bill Johnson

1. The residents of East Palestine have been repeatedly told that the air in the community is safe to breathe and the water in the area is safe to drink. Can you explain how the U.S. EPA, Ohio EPA, and the Columbiana County Health Department reached that conclusion?

Ohio EPA oversees public drinking water systems in Ohio and to ensure the Village of East Palestine's water supply remains safe following the Norfolk Southern (NS) train derailment, we have been sampling the five municipal supply wells and the treated water on a weekly basis since February 11, 2023. In addition to witnessing the sample collection by NS contractors, Ohio EPA is collecting an independent sample for separate confirmation analysis and testing for a broad array of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs).

To protect the Village in the near- and the long-term, Ohio EPA oversaw the installation of four sentinel monitoring wells between the municipal wellfield and contaminated waterways. These sentinel monitoring wells will identify contamination in groundwater before it reaches the wellfield. To determine if the local aquifer has been impacted closer to the derailment site, eight sentinel monitoring wells were also installed. Additionally, a series of monitoring wells are being installed adjacent to the derailment site, and along with soil testing, will determine the presence and potential extent of any groundwater contamination. While the work and assessments at the derailment site proceed, the sentinel wells will be sampled weekly by NS and Ohio EPA will sample a subset of these wells biweekly. A map of monitoring wells (Figure A) and lab results are posted publicly on Ohio EPA's [website](#).

Additionally, funding in the amount of over \$425,000 was recently provided by NS to the Village to proactively obtain and install carbon filtration at the water treatment plant. This is part of a contingency plan to ensure the long-term safety and resilience of the Village's water supply. Ohio EPA is working closely with the Village for the needed engineering review and approvals to expedite completion of this important proactive and protective measure.

US EPA has been overseeing air monitoring in the area since the derailment and the Columbiana County Health Department has been overseeing private well testing.

Please speak to monitoring data and cleanup of the local stream.

- a. Do you think this contamination can be contained and cleaned up?

Ohio EPA will remain engaged in site investigation and clean-up activities well into the future, until the air, water and soil at the site have been thoroughly remediated. It will require several months to conduct the investigation and remediation work, followed by an additional period of long-term monitoring to verify that the clean-up goals have been achieved.

- b. Are there any suspected impacts to the Ohio River?

The latest water sampling results of the Ohio River by the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) indicate no detections of chemicals from the derailment. In addition, no vinyl chloride has been detected in the surface water anywhere outside the containment areas.

Contractors take samples in 20 different locations and have a website setup with an interactive map where you can see exactly where sampling is occurring and what is being sampled for. We continue to see dilution of the chemicals of concern. All this information can be found at Ohio EPA's [website](#).

Figure A:

East Palestine Ground Water Source and Monitoring Wells

