

For Information, Contact:

Laura Cummings, P.E.

Executive Director

973-326-6866

lcummings@smcmua.org

Drew Saskowitz

Water Quality Superintendent

973-326-7232

dsaskowitz@smcmua.org

For Immediate Release

**SOUTHEAST MORRIS COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY
PWS NJ #1424001**

Environmental Working Group Report on Chromium 6 in Drinking Water

(Cedar Knolls, NJ) — The Southeast Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority (SMCMUA) is issuing this press release to provide additional information on Chromium 6 (hexavalent chromium) as reported by the Patch on 10/23/19 based on information provided by the Environmental Working Group (EWG). The report provides misleading results that implies that our drinking water is not in compliance with established and enforceable regulatory standards. SMCMUA is in compliance with enforceable standards regarding chromium along with all other primary contaminants regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP).

Chromium is an odorless and tasteless metallic element that is found naturally in rocks, plants, soil, volcanic dust and animals. The most common forms are Chromium-3 and Chromium-6. Chromium-3 is an essential human dietary element. Chromium-6 occurs naturally but can also be produced by industrial processes. The current EPA Total Chromium standard is based on allergic dermatitis (skin reactions). EPA is currently reevaluating Chromium-6 through its Integrated Risk Information System, a process that characterizes the potential health risks based on available science. EPA completed a national assessment of the occurrence of both Total Chromium and Chromium-6 as part of the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule 3 (UCMR3).

Chromium-6 is not regulated by EPA or NJDEP and the referenced EWG health guideline is not an enforceable drinking water standard. However, in 1991 the EPA did establish an enforceable maximum contaminant level (MCL) for Total Chromium, where the Total Chromium measurement represents the concentration of both Chromium-6 and Chromium-3 (trivalent chromium). SMCMUA monitors all sources for Total Chromium on an annual basis in accordance with the regulations and maintains compliance with the standard.¹ In 2015, SMCMUA completed a one-year monitoring program for both Total Chromium and Chromium-6 as required by EPA as part of UCMR3.²

The health guideline that EWG referenced is a non-enforceable public health goal (PHG) established by the State of California in 2011. In California, the PHG is developed as a *step in the process* of developing an enforceable standard for drinking water. The final standard is based on several factors including health effects and technical and economic feasibility. The final MCL is then set as close to the PHG as possible. In 2014, California did develop a regulatory standard, or MCL, for Chromium-6 about 500 times that of the PHG.³ However, subsequently in 2017, the MCL was invalidated by the Superior Court of Sacramento where the State Water Board was found to have failed to properly consider the *economic* feasibility of complying with the MCL setting regulatory process.

The Authority is committed to providing superior quality water that exceeds the standards established by EPA and the NJDEP. We encourage members of our community to contact us directly and to visit our website for additional information on our water quality, including our annual consumer confidence reports.

If you are considering purchasing a water filter or other home treatment device, we encourage you to make a fully informed decision.

- Contact us or visit our website to see our latest report on water quality.
- If you decide to purchase a water filter, make sure it is certified to address the issue of concern to you. [NSF International](#) is an independent organization that certifies home treatment devices.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions to make sure the device is maintained properly.

¹ SMCMUA samples all sources on an annual basis for Total Chromium. All data collected by the Authority, for the past ten (10) years indicate no value greater than 7 ppb, or 7% of EPA's MCL, for all sources monitored for Total Chromium.

² The highest detection observed for the UCMR3 monitoring event for Total Chromium was 1.2 ppb, or 1.2% of the EPA MCL, and the highest detection for Chromium-6 was 0.72 ppb.

³ In 2014, California established a MCL of 10 ppb for Chromium-6 which was later invalidated. All measurements made by SMCMUA, as described above, for either Total Chromium or Chromium-6 have been below the California MCL for Chromium-6.

CONTACT CUSTOMER SERVICE: Consumers can report non-emergency questions or concerns to our Customer Service Division at 973-326-6880 or customerservice@smcmua.org. Emergency conditions should be reported directly to 973-326-6880 during normal business hours and 973-867-1758 for after hour emergencies. Additional information is available on our website at www.smcmua.org.

ACCOUNT INFORMATION: SMCMUA requests that account holders maintain current contact information to aid in communications for billing, service and for emergency purposes. Contact Customer Service to confirm your account information is accurate.

REGISTER FOR CITIZEN ALERTS: SMCMUA requests that all consumers who live and/or work in the service area register with Morris County **Alert**Morris **Smart911™ Notification System** (<https://oem.morriscountynj.gov/alerts>) to better ensure the timely delivery of emergency notices associated with water supply, quality or other important community messages. If you do not have access to a computer please ask a relative, friend or neighbor to register for you. You can also register at www.smcmua.org and choose the “**REGISTER FOR CITIZEN ALERTS**” icon. If you were previously registered with Everbridge you will need to register again.

SMCMUA was established in December of 1976. SMCMUA provides drinking water to approximately 62,000 consumers in Morris County. The SMCMUA creating municipalities are the Town of Morristown, the Township of Morris, the Township of Hanover and the Borough of Morris Plains.