

SETTLEMENT APPROVED FOR TEMPORARY, CLEAN DRINKING WATER FOR SUMMERVILLE GEORGIA WATER CUSTOMERS

On April 23, 2025, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia approved the first class settlement to provide temporary, clean drinking water for Summerville, Georgia, water customers. The case, brought by Earl Parris, Jr. in 2021 on behalf of himself and a class of water users, has shown that Summerville's drinking water is contaminated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which have migrated from farm fields into the Raccoon Creek watershed where Summerville draws its drinking water. The levels of two PFAS in the City's drinking water, PFOA and PFOS, are currently several times higher than the EPA safe drinking water levels. The PFAS were used at the Mount Vernon Mills, Inc., textile mill in the Town of Trion, Georgia, and discharged to the Trion wastewater treatment plant, which spread the sludge from the wastewater treatment onto farm fields in the area.

Under this initial settlement with one of the defendants, Pulcra Chemicals, LLC, a Temporary Drinking Water Fund will be created with \$1 million to be deposited by Pulcra so that clean bottled water or filters can be provided to those who are currently Summerville water customers. The Fund will be established in the next two weeks, and the contract for water deliveries and filters will be negotiated by a Settlement Administrator. Water users will be notified of how to request the water or the filters, which will be free to eligible users. Ed Gentle, the Court appointed Settlement Administrator, will be contacting Class members about options. His contact information is on the website, summervilleclasssettlement.com

There are two other class settlements that have been preliminarily approved to expand the Fund, with the goal of providing clean drinking water to Summerville water users until the city has constructed a new, permanent drinking water treatment system that will remove PFOA and PFOS. Other settlements, with defendants Huntsman International, LLC, Mount Vernon Mills, Inc., and the Town of Trion, will be considered for final approval by the Court in June.

The City of Summerville has entered into a separate settlement with Pulcra. Proceeds of the City's settlement with Pulcra will go towards assisting the City with moving forward with engineering design and ultimately the construction of permanent improvements to remove PFOA and PFOS and other PFAS chemicals from the City's drinking water and/or wastewater systems.

Earl Parris, Jr., the plaintiff and class representative, is a former Summerville City Council member, who has been seeking clean water for Summerville since filing the class action lawsuit in 2021. He stated, "we are extremely happy to have accomplished the first step in court today. The people of Summerville should not have to drink water with toxic PFAS, and we will continue fighting until the chemical companies who profited from their use remove them from our drinking water."

Earl Parris, Jr., and the proposed class, are represented by Davis, Johnston, and Ringger, P.C., and Tom Causby, of the Causby Firm. Pulcra Chemicals, LLC is represented by Kazmarek, Mowery, Cloud, Laseter, LLP.