

2.1 Deputy P.J. Rondel of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding contamination of the water courses in the area below the Airport apron:

Given that in the 1990's A.F.F.F. (Aqueous Film Forming Foam) contaminated the water courses in the area below the Airport apron, would the Minister advise what the cost to date of the clean up and supply of potable water supplies to the homes in that area has been and what health effects, if any, there are from ingesting water containing traces of A.F.F.F. and P.F.O.S. (Perfluoro-Octyl Sulphonate).

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Economic Development):

To date £6,977,250 has been spent on the remediation, reinstatement and management of water contamination caused by P.F.O.S. This includes construction costs of providing the fire training ground and rig. Costs incurred since 1st January 2005 have been met from the Airport Trading Fund. To date neither Jersey Airport nor Health Protection Services have received any direct correspondence from residents or their G.P.s (General Practitioners) relating to any specific health concerns as a result of ingesting affected water.

2.1.1 The Deputy of St. John:

In the Minister's written reply to a similar question, I put the question as to ... can I put the question as to the water being extracted from 4 out of 5 boreholes within the affected area is being delivered to Val de la Mare reservoir. Is the Minister happy that water is ... and it is reported as being contaminated or having been contaminated, that that water is being treated sufficiently to remove all traces of P.F.O.S. and P.T.F.O.S. from the domestic water supply within the Island?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

It is not for the Minister, if I may say, to be satisfied. It is a matter for both the Water Department to be satisfied by, more importantly, the Health Protection Services to be satisfied. I understand that both those parties are fully satisfied with the process that has been undertaken currently and that water is perfectly safe, as far as they are concerned.

2.1.2 Deputy C.H. Egré of St. Peter:

Would the Minister confirm that at present the States of Jersey are paying for legal representation to affected members? Would he also confirm that our own Law Officers are defending against a legal representation which the States are paying for at both ends? Would he accept that this is an absolutely ludicrous situation that should be dealt with as soon as possible? This has been going on for years.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

Yes, I can confirm that the airport have legal representation in this matter. I can also confirm that the Law Officers are also representing the public interest in this matter. I understand also the frustrations that the Deputy feels. I have worked very closely with him over the period and I recognise and thank him for all the efforts he has put in, in trying to resolve what is a long and frustrating matter. It is reaching, I hope, a satisfactory conclusion in the not too far future.

2.1.3 The Deputy of St. Peter:

I thank the Minister for his confidence in the way I support my parishioners. Would he further accept the fact that I went with a parishioner to meet the Health Protection Agency, before his time, when it was noted that P.F.O.S. levels were in excess of 80 parts per billion at a particular residence and I took the resident there, and also to note that he is aware that the current limit put on is 0.3 parts per billion for safe drinking water? Would he also accept the fact that the figure I have given him of 80 parts per billion is one of the highest levels noted in the world?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I accept that the Deputy has become somewhat of an expert on this particular subject. He has studied it, he has represented his constituents, as one would expect him to do, and I am sure if he says that he went to see Health Protection prior to my time, that is absolutely correct. I do not doubt it at all. His recollections of the safe limits as far as P.F.O.S. in water supply, that that limit is changing. Currently he is correct. It is 0.3 parts per billion.

Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence:

It is just to declare an interest in the wider sense as the owner of one of the properties that was formerly affected by the water.

The Bailiff:

I do not think you need to declare an interest, Deputy, as there will be no vote on this matter. Deputy of St. John, final question.

2.1.4 The Deputy of St. John:

Given as the product is not biodegradable but is bioaccumulative in the body and can cause cancers and break down the immune system, are residents of the affected area regularly blood tested?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

No, is the short answer to the question. I would also add that the suggestion of the health risks are frankly unknown by, if I may be so bold, from more eminent individuals in the medical field than the good Deputy of St. John. It was long thought that this particular product, P.F.O.S., was chemically so inert that it was biologically inactive. I accept that matters have moved on since then, all the same, as far as the medical profession is concerned, the health risks, although they are recognised there is no clear linkage to any particular medical illness.

The Bailiff:

No, I said final question, Deputy.

The Deputy of St. John:

Basically I was being challenged there and I should be permitted to put a final supplementary.

The Bailiff:

No, I am sorry, Deputy.