



## BOROUGH OF HO-HO-KUS

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### **An important message from Mayor Thomas Randall on our Water System**

The Ho-Ho-Kus Mayor and Council are excited and proud to announce that as of March 26, 2024, our water is now below detectable levels for both PFOA and PFNA contaminants throughout our water system. This finding has been confirmed with follow-up tests on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. You will be receiving a letter shortly confirming that this finding has been verified, accepted, and approved by the New Jersey DEP. To illustrate what this means to our residents, NONE of these contaminants can be found at the parts per trillion standard (equivalent to one single drop in 20 Olympic Swimming Pools) that New Jersey and more recently the US Environmental Protection Agency has adopted. While this situation has affected nearly every water system in New Jersey, the swift, proactive action of our leaders and team has resulted in a completion date ahead of schedule. Significantly, Ho-Ho-Kus is one of the first water systems in the state to accomplish this result for all our wells that supply our entire delivery system.

From the outset, the Borough thought it was important that it was open and transparent with our residents on this important matter and changes to the DEP water regulations. We have done so not only through our communications, but initially by calling for a public meeting back in 2019, long before the regulations were set to start in 2021. Once we were aware of any potential for these forever chemicals to be in our water system, our governing body instructed our team, including the Borough Administrator, Water and Public Works Department, our engineers and hydrogeologist, to investigate the best possible solution to ensure safe, contaminate-free water. From the first test, which showed some level of contaminants in our wells, the plan has always been to remove them completely from our entire system. Options to address specific locations and average the numbers which might leave even trace levels were not acceptable to our team. This proactive approach has led to the Borough being one of the first impacted systems to be completely below detection for these contaminants in the state. This was accomplished by working non-stop from day one; even during the Covid shutdowns of some businesses and state agencies. This enabled the Borough the ability to have a plan ready to go as things re-opened. As a result, the Borough was able to leapfrog many other systems in the approval process, as well as maximize the opportunity for funding and debt relief for the project. The fact that Ho-Ho-Kus had a shovel-ready project plan ahead of almost everyone else in the state not only allowed the Borough to secure a loan with favorable rates, but we also were able to obtain a \$1 million savings off the top for debt forgiveness. This saved our residents not only a million dollars, but set a substantial portion of the remaining debt at 0% interest, with the rest at very favorable rates, resulting in more savings.

We are happy to announce that the DEP has been on site and has given their final approvals to close out the remediation portion of the project on April 18<sup>th</sup>. While a few cosmetic and punch-list items remain to be completed, the water quality portion is complete.

On behalf of the Mayor and Council and the entire Water Department team, we would like to thank the residents for their patience during this time. We always endeavored to keep you informed throughout the process given its importance, and kept our promise to complete this project as quickly as possible. The members of the Governing Body are residents and, like many others had the same concerns in making sure our water passes, and exceed, all state requirements. In doing so, the Borough did everything it could to keep this project on track in returning our water to the safest possible non-detectable levels of these contaminants. This work has resulted in the best possible outcome for our residents.

If you have any remaining questions, you may contact Borough Administrator at 201-652-4400 ext. 231.



Mayor Thomas Randall