



UPPER UWCHLAN TOWNSHIP

140 Pottstown Pike
Chester Springs, PA 19425
(P) 610-458-9400 (F) 610-458-0307
www.upperuwchlan-pa.gov



ADMINISTRATION

Date: August 12, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INADVERTENT RETURN AT SUNOCO DRILLING LOCATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CHESTER SPRINGS, PA – As Upper Uwchlan Township [has shared on our website](http://www.upperuwchlan-pa.gov) over the past two days, there was an Inadvertent Return (IR) at a Sunoco/Energy Transfer Partners (ETP) pipeline drilling location in the Township on Monday, August 10. We are providing this update to answer some of the questions that many residents have about the incident.

What is an Inadvertent Return?

The Sunoco Mariner East pipeline project utilizes Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) as the construction method at this drill site. Inadvertent Returns occur when drilling mud, used to lubricate the drill underground, follows a fissure in the geology and finds its way to the surface.

What is the drilling mud?

The fluid is a mix of water and bentonite clay, a naturally occurring nontoxic clay. Additives may be used in the mixture but must adhere to standards for safe drinking water. You can find fact sheets about bentonite and additives on the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) website [at this link](https://www.dep.state.pa.us/water/quality/chemicals/bentonite/).

If it's just mud, what's the big deal?

Any silt, soils or clay in the water can cause harm to the aquatic wildlife and their habitat. An analysis of the incident's impact on aquatic life will be conducted.

Do I need to be concerned about my drinking water?

The DEP has stated that there is no anticipation of a threat to the public water suppliers downstream from the IR. Nonetheless, both the Downingtown Water Authority and Aqua's West Chester facility have been notified.

While homeowners whose wells are closest to the IR have been notified of the incident, at this time Energy Transfer Partners does not believe that private wells have been affected.

If you have a private well, any turbidity, discoloration, or smell in your water should be immediately reported to the DEP and Chester County Department of Health.

What is the Township doing to address this or stop the pipeline company?

Upper Uwchlan Township does not have enforcement or regulatory authority over the location, construction, or operation of underground transmission pipelines in the Township. These powers are held by Federal and State agencies. However, Upper Uwchlan Township is in communication with those regulators, as well as PA elected officials, and will continue to advocate vigorously for a complete and proper cleanup of this discharge, full restoration of our waterways, and a thorough investigation by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Upper Uwchlan Township is a Township of the Second class, population 11,500, located in central Chester County, PA. Visit us on the web at www.upperuwchlan-pa.gov. Like us on Facebook and Twitter @upperuwchlan.

#####