

LONG ISLAND

Water district moves to amend suit

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Claims stemming from new, high levels of toxic contamination discovered deep under the ground near a former naval industrial site this year should be included in the Bethpage Water District's ongoing lawsuit against Northrop Grumman Corp., the district argued in a court filing Friday.

The district is seeking to amend its initial complaint against Northrop Grumman, originally filed last year, in which the district claims the company contaminated the area's groundwater.

The new claim stems from high levels of trichloroethylene, or TCE, that the Navy

found in a monitoring well hundreds of feet below the surface north of Hempstead Turnpike in Bethpage.

The Navy, which had partnered with Northrop Grumman to operate the former defense plant, is monitoring the groundwater in the area for the toxic waste.

In the court papers, filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District in Central Islip, the water district argues that the contamination, which it says it first learned about in October, is now affecting its public-supply wells.

The spike was found 1,700 feet away from where the Bethpage district operates a drinking-water well. The district treats its water to non-detect-

able levels of TCE.

The district also argued that the high levels of contamination mean that the groundwater treatment systems that Northrop Grumman is operating on its former site "are inadequate to prevent migration of additional contaminants off-site."

The filing also claims that the spike "may indicate a new plume from another source within the site." Currently, two plumes of contamination have been identified — a shallow one discovered in 1986 and a larger, deeper one found in 2009 under Bethpage Community Park, where the company had once legally dumped chemicals decades ago.

A spokesman for Northrop



A well site in Plainedge, where carcinogen levels are high.
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Grumman declined to comment. The court has not yet ruled on whether the district can amend its complaint to include the new claims.

The district is seeking damages to cover the cost of water treatment and the construction of new wells outside the plume area.