

Rep. Baldeh: Statement on PFAS budget action

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Statement of Rep. Samba Baldeh (D-Madison) on PFAS Budget Action

PFAS chemicals in municipal water supplies pose a significant health threat from La Crosse to Marinette and Rhinelander to Madison. These communities are known to be at-risk due to PFAS-contaminated water. However, it is probable that many more municipal water systems are contaminated but do not know the extent of the problem.

Governor Evers' budget proposal addresses this problem with a number of initiatives that are needed to prevent serious health consequences for vulnerable people:

An Action Plan: Addresses the state of information on the extent of the problems; methods and a plan for broad-based analyses of water supplies; best methods for putting remediation and mitigation plans into effect.

Municipal Testing and Mitigation: \$10 million in each year to test municipal water systems. Establish a grant program for remediation of polluted municipal water systems. This is a critical step because many utilities have been reluctant to test their water.

Collection and Disposal of Firefighting Foam: Foam to suppress fires has been a major source of the PFAS in groundwater. \$1 million in each year will start the process of safely collecting contaminated soils along with the foam.

The development of a meaningful and long-range response to PFAS contamination

has been a priority for me in this budget. As the representative of a community that has been faced with such significant contamination that it decided to shut down it's well. Many other smaller communities may not have the option of multiple wells.

I am gratified that the Governor takes this problem seriously and acknowledges that a broad approach is necessary. Action has been needed for more than a decade. I hope all legislators recognize the gravity of this problem. If they do not, it may be that their water supply has not yet been tested.