

# Clean Wisconsin: Gov. Evers pushes legislature for action on toxic PFAS chemicals

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Statement from Clean Wisconsin Water and Agriculture Program Director Sara Walling about the Governor's actions on PFAS today:

"Communities across Wisconsin are dealing with toxic PFAS 'forever chemicals' contaminating their drinking water, groundwater, lakes and streams. This year, \$125 million was included in the state budget to help those communities access safe drinking water and begin cleaning up contamination sites. But right now, that money sits in a trust fund because state lawmakers have failed to pass a spending bill that protects both families and the state's ability to hold polluters accountable.

Governor Evers recognizes the need for urgent action to address the PFAS contamination crisis in our state. Clean Wisconsin supports his call on the Joint Finance Committee to release this money to the Department of Natural Resources so the agency can get funding where it's needed most. We don't have time to wait.

We also support the governor's call for necessary legislation so that new groundwater standards developed by the DNR can protect rural Wisconsinites who get their drinking water from private wells. The REINS Act is obstructionist legislation that prevents our agencies from implementing the law and shields polluters. It should not stand in the way of getting Wisconsin families the help they need.

Groundwater is not only a source of drinking water for rural families, it also irrigates Wisconsin's crops and provides drinking water for our livestock. There is no denying that measures to protect groundwater and private wells from PFAS pollution come

with a cost. But the cost of PFAS tainting our soils, our livestock, our crops, our fish and our water supplies is far higher. Clean Wisconsin agrees with Governor Evers that the legislature should exempt proposed PFAS groundwater standards from the REINS Act and instead put its full efforts behind stopping this crisis of contamination in our state. The health of Wisconsin families and our farm economy is at stake.”

PFAS (or per-and-polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a class of thousands of different chemicals, many of which are still being manufactured and used in a wide variety of products, like non-stick pans, fast food wrappers, carpets, upholstery, firefighting foam, shoes and clothing. The harmful chemicals have made their way into waterways across Wisconsin, prompting the DNR to issue numerous fish consumption advisories. PFAS have also been detected in municipal drinking water systems and private water wells in many communities including Eau Claire, La Crosse, Madison, Rhinelander, Marshfield, Manitowoc, French Island, Marinette, Peshtigo and Wausau. Studies have shown that high-level exposure to PFAS is associated with suppressed vaccine response, increased risk of some cancers, increased cholesterol, and increased risk of high blood pressure in pregnant women.