

Dept. of Justice: Attorney General Kaul leads 17 States in urging EPA to finalize proposed PFAS drinking water standards

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today, as part of a 17-state coalition filed [comments](#) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supporting the agency’s proposal to set enforceable drinking water standards for six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—more commonly known as PFAS or “forever” chemicals.

“Wisconsinites should be able to feel confident that when they turn on the faucet, the water will be safe to drink,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “National drinking water standards for PFAS would help protect people’s health from the harms caused by forever chemicals.”

In the proposed rule, EPA set Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) and Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLG) for six PFAS regularly found in drinking water: PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, GenX, PFNA, and PFBS. In the States’ comment letter, the States express support for (1) EPA’s authority to set the PFAS drinking water standards; (2) EPA’s authority to issue a preliminary determination and simultaneously propose MCLs and MCLGs for PFAS in drinking water; and (3) EPA’s proposed Hazard Index approach to regulate PFHxS, GenX, PFNA, and PFBS individually and as a mixture.

While supportive of the proposed rule, the comment letter also urges EPA to (1) make technical and engineering resources available to public water systems so that the financial burden of removing PFAS does not unfairly fall on ratepayers and customers; (2) finalize the drinking water standards quickly; and (3) consider

drinking water standards for other PFAS after finalizing the rule.

PFAS chemicals resist degradation in the environment and accumulate in the body. Those contaminants may be linked to serious adverse health effects in humans and animals. Epidemiologic studies have shown that potential adverse human health effects from exposure to some PFAS include increased serum cholesterol, immune dysregulation, pregnancy-induced hypertension, and kidney and testicular cancers. Exposure to certain types of PFAS is also associated with low birthweight in humans, suppressed immune system response, dyslipidemia, impaired kidney function, and delayed onset of menstruation.

Across the country, PFAS contamination is often found at military bases, firefighting training centers, civilian airports, and industrial facilities. PFAS chemicals tend to be persistent in the environment and have been used for decades as ingredients in firefighting foam and consumer products. Some states with significant PFAS contamination are currently spending a significant amount of money to address the contamination in public drinking water systems, and to investigate numerous areas and sources of potential contamination.

The attorneys general state in the letter that “[o]ur states face substantial threats to public health and the environment from PFAS” and that “[w]e strongly support EPA’s proposed action to set national standards to protect the public from the harmful health impacts of PFAS in drinking water.”

In addition to Wisconsin Attorney General Kaul, attorneys general from the following states signed the letter: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia.

Read the comment letter [here](#).

View the press release on the Wisconsin DOJ website [here](#).