

Gov. Evers: Builds upon efforts to clean up Wisconsin's water, approves new rule changes strengthening PFAS drinking water standards

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced that he has approved new changes to bring the state's current drinking water standards in line with [federal limits for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#), reducing the state's threshold for PFAS contamination from its current, outdated level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) to a new enforceable standard of 4.0 part per trillion (ppt) for certain contaminants—an effort that will significantly improve drinking water standards and quality for Wisconsin residents. The governor's announcement also comes as last year, the Natural Resources Board and the governor [approved](#) amendments to the state's lead and copper rule to be in line with [federal standards](#). Together, these actions build on longstanding efforts of the Evers Administration to combat PFAS and lead, protect kids and families from harmful contaminants, and expand access to safe drinking water statewide.

“Whether it's kids in the classroom, families at home, or our farmers and agricultural industries, folks should be able to trust that the water coming from their tap is clean and safe—simple as that—and I'm proud of our work to further strengthen our drinking water standards here in Wisconsin to ensure the health and safety of our kids, families, and communities,” said Gov. Evers. “My administration has been committed to getting harmful contaminants like lead, copper, and PFAS out of our water since Day One, and with these new, stronger standards, not only are we keeping folks safe, but we're building a

healthier future for Wisconsin.”

This announcement comes amid ongoing [bipartisan negotiations](#) between Gov. Evers and Republican lawmakers to ensure the release of \$125 million in long-awaited investments to address PFAS contaminants that were approved in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget over two years ago. The Wisconsin State Assembly approved [Assembly Bill 130](#) and [Assembly Bill 131](#), which, as passed, reflect key aspects of the bipartisan compromise. Now, the measures are being considered for approval by the Wisconsin State Senate, which is slated to [conclude](#) its general-business session in March, with opportunities for additional limited-business in April. The governor has [vowed](#) to call the Wisconsin State Legislature back into special session at any time during 2026 if key [priorities](#), such as comprehensively addressing PFAS contamination, remain unfinished.

To begin the rulemaking process, the governor and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [submitted](#) a scope statement to amend the current drinking water standards to reflect the new federal maximum contaminant levels for PFOA and PFOS and include water standards for three new PFAS compounds for which Wisconsin does not currently have standards. As a result, the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board [approved](#) those standards in January, and last week the governor signed off on the new rules.

Wisconsin’s previous enforceable standards for PFAS, [established in 2022](#) before the EPA had any drinking water standards for PFAS, were 70 ppt for PFOA and PFOS. The updated federal rule includes a new enforceable standard of 4.0 ppt for PFOA and PFOS, as well as 10 ppt for other [outlined](#) PFAS groups. Similarly, the new lead and copper drinking water rules [approved](#) by the governor and the Natural Resources Board in December lowered the lead action level in Wisconsin from 0.015 milligrams per liter (mg/L) to 0.010 mg/L. Both rule changes for lead and copper standards and PFAS standards outline that water systems must take corrective action if the new standards are exceeded to protect public health, welfare, and the safety of the customers it serves.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON GOV. EVERS’ AND THE EVERS ADMINISTRATION’S EFFORTS TO FIGHT PFAS AND LEAD CONTAMINATION STATEWIDE

Gov. Evers declared 2019 the Year of Clean Drinking Water, and for the past

seven years, has prioritized efforts to address PFAS contamination, proposing numerous comprehensive plans to protect Wisconsinites from PFAS in drinking, ground, and surface water. The Evers Administration enacted the first statewide standards for PFAS in surface and drinking water and has proposed groundwater standards multiple times despite Republican obstruction. Gov. Evers also secured a historic \$125 million investment of state funding in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget to assist homeowners and communities in addressing PFAS contamination, but, as noted above, Republicans in the Legislature have blocked the DNR from accessing this funding for over two years.

Following multiple attempts to call on the Legislature to release this funding without delay, last session, Gov. Evers vetoed Senate Bill 312, a Republican bill claiming to release the PFAS Trust Fund and address contamination but in fact did not release one dollar from the PFAS Trust Fund and also included harmful “poison pill” provisions that would have removed authority the DNR currently possesses to hold PFAS polluters accountable and require those polluters to clean up their own spills, despite the governor communicating to bill authors that the bill would be vetoed unless they removed this “poison pill” provision.

Months later, in his 2025-27 Executive Budget, Gov. Evers once again recommended a comprehensive plan to address PFAS contamination across surface, drinking, and groundwater. Among other provisions, the governor’s proposal recommended allowing the full balance of the PFAS Trust Fund to be utilized by the DNR, with special attention made to protect innocent landowners, as well as the adoption of major policies in the CLEAR Act, including exempting DNR rulemaking relating to setting enforceable PFAS standards from the REINS Act. Unfortunately, Republican lawmakers removed the majority of the governor’s proposals to address PFAS contamination from the final budget. More on Gov. Evers 2025-27 Executive Budget recommendations to address PFAS statewide is available [here](#).

Despite these obstructions, the Evers Administration has continuously sought bipartisan compromise to release funding from the PFAS Trust Fund as well as protect truly innocent landowners. In addition to the efforts noted above, additional resources outlining Gov. Evers and the Evers Administration’s efforts to urge Republican leaders to release the \$125 million PFAS Trust fund approved in the 2023-25 Biennial Budget are available below:

- Jan. 21, 2026: [NEW: Gov. Evers Optimistic About Reaching Final Deal with Republican Lawmakers to Secure Release of \\$125 Million in Long-Awaited PFAS](#)

Investments

- Feb. 18, 2025: [Gov. Evers Announces Comprehensive Plan to Ensure Clean Water for Kids and Families in 2025 Year of the Kid](#)
- Feb. 4, 2025: [Gov. Evers Announces New Plans to Combat PFAS, Protect Kids and Families from Harmful Contaminants, and Expand Access to Clean, Safe Drinking Water](#)
- May 6, 2024: [Gov. Evers Again Calls Republican Lawmakers into Special Meeting to Urge Immediate Release of \\$140 Million to Fight PFAS Statewide, Respond to Hospital Closures in Western Wisconsin](#)
- April 16, 2024: [Republican Lawmakers No-Show at Special Meeting to Release Statewide PFAS Funding, Stabilize Healthcare Access in Western Wisconsin](#)
- April 9, 2024: [Gov. Evers Calls Joint Finance Committee into Special Meeting to Release Critical Funds to Fight PFAS Statewide, Stabilize Healthcare Access in Western Wisconsin](#)
- March 18, 2024: [ICYMI: Gov. Evers Visits Local Water Treatment Centers, Continues to Urge Republicans to Release \\$125 Million to Fight PFAS Statewide](#)
- March 14, 2024: [Gov. Evers Again Urges Legislative Republicans to Release \\$140 Million to Fight PFAS Statewide, Stabilize Healthcare Access in Western Wisconsin](#)
- March 11, 2024: [Gov. Evers Slams Republicans for Continued Delays Releasing Critical Funds to Fight PFAS Statewide, Stabilize Healthcare Industry in Western Wisconsin](#)
- Feb. 27, 2024: [Gov. Evers Urges Lawmakers to Support Compromise to Release \\$125 Million to Fight PFAS Contaminants Statewide](#)
- Jan. 23, 2024: [Gov. Evers Again Urges Wisconsin Republicans to Release \\$125 Million in Already-Approved Funds to Fight PFAS Statewide](#)
- Dec. 19, 2023: [Gov. Evers Urges Legislature to Release \\$125 Million to Address PFAS, Act to Protect Wisconsin's Groundwater](#)

Gov. Evers has also made efforts to replace lead service lines across the state a top priority. In May 2025, Gov. Evers announced the Wisconsin Department of Health Services [finalized](#) a new rule, making permanent an emergency rule that the governor [approved](#) in January 2025, to combat lead poisoning statewide by lowering the lead poisoning threshold to 3.5 µg/dL. By lowering the lead poisoning threshold, more kids and families will be eligible for lead poisoning and intervention resources, including education programming, screening, care coordination or follow-up services for kids not covered by a third-party payer, and other activities related to

poisoning or exposure.

Additionally, the governor's 2025-27 Biennial Budget proposal included an investment of more than \$300 million to help get lead out of Wisconsin's pipes, bubblers, schools, homes, and child care centers for good. Unfortunately, Republicans in the Legislature gutted the governor's proposal from the final budget as well. Despite this setback, Gov. Evers maintains that replacing lead service lines and ensuring Wisconsin residents have access to clean and safe water is essential.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).