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Contact: Jeanine Schneider (608) 266-7521

Legislative Committee Rolls Back Rule to Protect Water from Dangerous PFAS Chemicals in Firefighting Foam

MADISON – Today, the Joint Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules repealed critical provisions of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Emergency Rule ([EmR 2045](#)) intended to prevent certain manmade chemicals found in firefighting foam from entering Wisconsin's water supply. The proposed rule is the result of 2019 [Act 101](#), a bipartisan bill passed in February 2020 to address PFAS in firefighting foam.

"This rule was an important first step toward addressing the dangers presented by PFAS chemicals making their way into our groundwater and waterways," said Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison). "Act 101 and the resulting proposed rule are narrow in scope and just the beginning of needed work to address the dangers of PFAS in our water, making it even more shameful that today's action by the Republican-controlled committee renders the law toothless."

PFAS are a known threat to human health that can build up in the human body. Significant sources of PFAS identified by the CDC include drinking contaminated water from municipal water systems or private wells and eating fish caught from contaminated water.

Today's JCRAR hearing allowed testimony from invited guests only. Invitees included Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and other special interest groups opposed to the rule, yet none of the concerned individuals or organizations who testified to the Natural Resources Board in favor of the rule were allowed to testify today.

"Republicans are putting their heads in the sand and ignoring the impact of dangerous chemicals on our drinking water, instead they are allowing corporate special interests to decide what is best for the people of Wisconsin," said Rep. Subeck. "Their list of 'invited speakers' makes it abundantly clear that this is yet another example of Republican legislators putting politics ahead of the health and safety of the people of our state."

The committee's action today comes on the heels of [Wisconsin PFAS Action Council \(WisPAC\)](#)'s statewide [PFAS Action Plan](#) that was released earlier in the week as part of a statewide initiative created by Governor Evers's [Executive Order #40](#) to ensure Wisconsinites have access to clean, safe drinking water.

"Clean and safe drinking water should be a top priority, regardless of politics. Act 101 was a small but significant, bipartisan first step toward addressing PFAS contamination in our water," said Rep. Subeck. "The presence of PFAS in our food and water systems is a growing problem in Wisconsin and elsewhere, making today's rollback of rules to implement the Act particularly troublesome. "

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