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**Policy Report Release: PFAS: Forever Chemicals in Wisconsin — Wisconsin's Green Fire Releases *Opportunities Now* Report on PFAS**

**Rhineland, WI**— In light of continued human health and environmental concerns related to PFAS, or Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances across the state, Wisconsin needs swift and immediate action to identify, control, and regulate PFAS chemicals in the environment. PFAS are often called “forever chemicals” due to a molecular structure that gives them extraordinary persistence in the environment and the ability to resist decomposition. Valued for their ability to resist grease, stains, oil, water, and heat, PFAS are found in commonly used items such as non-stick pans and cookware, rain-resistant fabrics, and aqueous film forming foams used in firefighting. Releases of these chemicals into surface and ground waters can be traced to industrial sources that manufacture the chemicals, leachate from landfills, and firefighting exercises where PFAS-containing foams are used.

Exposures to high levels of PFAS have been linked to a myriad of human health issues, including increased risk of some cancers, decreased vaccine response in children, changes in liver enzymes, and fertility and pregnancy complications in women. Recently, elevated PFAS levels have been identified in municipal wells and groundwater in La Crosse, deer livers from deer found grazing near the contaminated JCI/Tyco plant in Marinette, and smelt harvested from Lake Superior. In their new *Opportunities Now* report, Wisconsin's Green Fire lays out a clear set of recommendations to tackle these issues and set Wisconsin on a path towards a cleaner and healthier future.

Key recommendations include:

- **Prioritizing the identification of PFAS exposures and releases across the state.** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) should require that all public water supplies begin testing multiple PFAS compounds and make the results of those tests publicly available. Secondly, WDNR should require statewide sampling of PFAS in the influent, effluent, and biosolids of municipal and industrial wastewater treatment facilities. Each of these efforts needs to be implemented no later than the 2021-2022 state fiscal year.
- **Establish science-based environmental standards for drinking water, groundwater, and surface waters for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) – the two most tested-for PFAS chemicals. A second phase should be considered to establish standards for other PFAS compounds.** Science-based standards should also be considered for biosolids application to cropped fields and other lands, for solid waste and soil, and sediment associated with remediation or cleanup projects.

- **Manage environmental PFAS contamination and devise cleanup procedures for PFAS-containing media.** This includes directing research dollars towards developing innovative approaches so that PFAS can be safely destroyed and provide funding for PFAS remediation efforts at release sites.

“Given the concerns over the health and environmental impacts of PFAS and the fact that they are ‘forever chemicals’, it is critical that we have protections in place to minimize the release of these compounds into the environment,” says John Robinson, co-chair of Wisconsin’s Green Fire Public Lands and Forestry Work Group. “Wisconsin has an opportunity to get this right by taking a holistic, comprehensive, and science-based approach when managing these chemicals and their impact on the environment.”

The full report is available at: [https://wigreenfire.org/2019/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/WGF\\_PFAS\\_Final-01-28-2021.pdf](https://wigreenfire.org/2019/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/WGF_PFAS_Final-01-28-2021.pdf)