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[hoosier.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:hoosier.chapter@sierraclub.org)  
317-822-3750



## **EPA Releases New PFAS “Forever Chemical” Drinking Water Standards**

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN** -- Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its first-ever legal standard for two PFAS “forever chemicals” -- PFOS and PFOA -- proposing a limit of no more than 4 parts per trillion (ppt) for each chemical in drinking water. EPA is also setting a combined standard for the total hazard posed by four other PFAS chemicals -- PFHxS, PFBS, PFNA, and HFPO-DA or GenX -- in drinking water. More than 200 million people in the United States are estimated to currently have unhealthy levels of PFAS in their water. EPA estimates the new standard, when enacted in 2024, will save billions of dollars in healthcare costs per year and prevent death and serious diseases like cancer, heart attacks, and strokes.

The announcement is a rare move for EPA which has not updated any drinking water standards for dangerous chemicals for more than two decades. In the short term, the costs of testing and removing PFAS from water will largely be covered by Federal funding, including \$5 billion for PFAS and other emerging contaminants in the Inflation Reduction Act.

The announcement is a clear acknowledgment that PFAS chemicals are more potent than previously believed. Last summer, EPA dramatically lowered its lifetime health advisory levels for PFOS and PFOA from 70 parts per trillion combined to 20 and 4 parts per quadrillion, respectively. When finalized, the new drinking water standard for PFOS and PFOA will be the lowest limit for any chemical the EPA regulates in water. While the proposed limits are a notable improvement from no limit, they are still more than 250 to 1,000 times higher than the amount EPA says is “safe” or ideal in water.

In response, Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter Director Amanda Shepherd issued the following statement:

“Indiana has taken some important first steps to [test for PFAS in water](#), and limit the use of PFAS-based fire fighting foams. But EPA’s announcement should be a wake up call for all of us. These chemicals are much more harmful than previously believed, and the state needs to take urgent action to halt PFAS pollution and protect our health.”

Sierra Club Senior Toxics Policy Advisor Sonya Lunder issued the following statement:

“EPA’s strong new limits for these six PFAS chemicals will prevent serious illnesses and save lives. EPA must keep its momentum by issuing rules to limit the production and use of PFAS chemicals and control their cleanup and disposal. In the long term, polluting industries, not the public, must pay the full cost of removing these ‘forever chemicals’ from the environment.”

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## About PFAS Chemicals

PFAS, or per-fluoroalkyl and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, commonly referred to as “forever chemicals,” are synthetic chemicals that never break down in the environment and are linked to a variety of health problems including kidney and testicular cancer, damaged immune systems, and harm to the liver, thyroid, and pancreatic function. More than 200 million people in the United States are estimated to currently have unhealthy levels of PFAS in their drinking water, and nearly every American has some amount of PFAS in their bodies—even newborns. This contamination is global in scope and primarily driven by the military’s use of PFAS-based firefighting foam, manufacturing companies like 3M, DuPont, and Chemours releasing chemical waste into the air, waterways, and sewage, and the widespread use of PFAS chemicals in consumer products like Teflon pans, rain gear, and more. To date, the EPA has been slow to restrict the ongoing production, use, and disposal of PFAS chemicals, and because of the weakness and deliberate carve-outs of the EPA’s Toxics Release Inventory, nearly every industry that currently produces or uses PFAS is able to conceal that from the public by classifying them as “trade secrets.”

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About Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter: The Sierra Club is the oldest, largest, and most influential grassroots environmental organizations in the United States with more than three million members and supporters. The Hoosier Chapter was formed in 1975 and has more than 10,000 members. Our mission is to explore, enjoy & protect wild places.