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**For Immediate Release:**

## **MASSACHUSETTS GROUPS APPLAUD EPA DRINKING WATER LIMITS AND CALL FOR STATE ACTION ON PFAS**

As the Environmental Protection Agency issues new federal limits on six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water, environmental organizations and firefighters are calling upon the state's political leaders to protect Massachusetts residents from continued PFAS contamination by passing pending legislation to phase out PFAS in consumer products, firefighters uniforms and firefighting foam.

"The new federal Maximum Contaminant Levels for PFAS in drinking water show that action to restrict the use of PFAS could not be more timely. Other states have banned PFAS in products and Massachusetts has to do the same or the contamination will only get worse," said Deirdre Cummings, Legislative Director of MASSPIRG.

Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances are a class of approximately 15,000 chemicals used in hundreds of products, including food packaging, carpets, clothing, electronics, building materials, and firefighting foam.

PFAS have gotten into drinking water, surface water, and groundwater worldwide. In fact, [PFAS have already contaminated](#) public water systems in 96 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

The new EPA limits are lower than Massachusetts' current Maximum Contaminant Level of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) for six PFAS in drinking water. Most significantly, EPA requires drinking water to have no more than 4 ppt of PFOA and 4 ppt of PFOS. These are the two most frequently found PFAS. EPA's MCL requires evaluation of two chemicals that are not part of the state's current drinking water standard: PFBS and HFPO-DA (GenX). EPA sets limits for PFNA, Gen X and PFHxS at 10 ppt each.

In January 2023, Representative Kate Hogan (D-Stow) and Senator Julian Cyr (D-Truro) introduced *An Act to Protect Massachusetts Public Health from PFAS* ([H 4486](#)), which would phase out PFAS in many products including food packaging, children's products, personal care products, cookware, car seats, textiles, upholstered furniture, carpets and rugs, firefighters personal protective equipment and firefighting foam. The bill would also cut industrial discharges of PFAS and set up a fund to help communities test and treat PFAS contamination in

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drinking water, soil, and groundwater. The bill is cosponsored by a [bipartisan majority of lawmakers](#) from the House and Senate and implements the recommendations outlined in the [PFAS Interagency Task Force Report](#) released last year.

The Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts, Last Call Foundation, and Nantucket PFAS Action Group have been calling upon state legislators to get PFAS out of firefighters personal protective equipment. Firefighters have higher rates of cancer than the general population. While other states have passed laws to ban PFAS in various products, Massachusetts is the first state to propose restricting PFAS in firefighter uniforms.

“This bill will protect Firefighters from Occupational Cancer by removing PFAS from our turnout gear and reducing our exposure to these harmful chemicals, **said Paul Jacques Legislative Agent for the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts (PFFM)**. If passed as written, this legislation would be the strongest language in the Country to address this important issue.”

**Ayesha Khan, wife of Nantucket firefighter Nate Barber, and co-founder, with Jaime Honkawa of the Nantucket PFAS Action Group** said, "The federal regulations on PFAS in drinking water are a long overdue, critical first step that will help protect millions of Americans from toxic PFAS in drinking water. However, this will continue to be a global catastrophe until we stop allowing the sale and manufacturing of all PFAS. We must persist in educating for a broad definition of PFAS, class regulation, a ban on non-essential uses, and holding manufacturers accountable for environmental cleanup."

**Clint Richmond, Conservation Chair for the Massachusetts Sierra Club** stated, “Based on the latest science, the EPA has issued stronger limits on PFAS in drinking water than the Commonwealth’s existing regulation. This will significantly increase the number of public water systems across the state that will need to make significant investments to comply with the new federal rule. These costs should not be borne by ratepayers or taxpayers when the problem stems from decades of industries using these toxic forever chemicals.”

**Laura Spark, Environmental Health Program Director at Clean Water Action** , said, “These chemicals didn’t even exist before the 1940s and now they contaminate water world-wide and are in the blood of every American that has been tested. It’s time for Massachusetts to join other states that are protecting their residents by preventing the continued manufacture and sale of products with toxic PFAS.”

**David Melly, Legislative Director for the Environmental League of Massachusetts**, said, “The science tells us that there’s no safe level of PFAS exposure, and virtually every water supply in Massachusetts is likely to exceed these new standards. Now that the EPA has implemented strong testing standards, we can and should protect Massachusetts residents by passing legislation that addresses these widespread health risks with comprehensive action.”

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