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Attorney General Brown and Coalition Urge EPA to Finalize Proposed PFAS Drinking Water Standards

BALTIMORE, MD (May 31, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown, as part of a 17-state coalition, filed [comments](#) to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), supporting the agency’s proposal to set enforceable drinking water standards for six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances – more commonly known as PFAS or “forever” chemicals.

In the proposed rule, EPA set Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) and Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLG) for six PFAS chemicals regularly found in drinking water. In the comment letter, the coalition expresses support for: (1) EPA’s authority to set the PFAS drinking water standards; (2) EPA’s authority to issue a preliminary determination and simultaneously propose MCLs and MCLGs for PFAS in drinking water; and (3) EPA’s proposed approach to regulate certain PFAS chemical individually and as a mixture.

PFAS chemicals resist degradation in the environment and accumulate in the body. Those contaminants may be linked to serious adverse health effects in humans and animals. Epidemiologic studies have shown that potential adverse human health effects from exposure to some PFAS include increased serum cholesterol, immune dysregulation, pregnancy-induced hypertension, and kidney and testicular cancers. Exposure to certain types of PFAS is also associated with low birthweight in humans, suppressed immune system response, dyslipidemia, impaired kidney function, and delayed onset of menstruation. Just yesterday, Attorney General Brown [filed two lawsuits](#) on behalf of the State of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Environment, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Maryland Department of Health, against multiple chemical manufacturers for PFAS contamination of Maryland’s waters and other natural resources.

“A glass of water should never be a gamble with health for Marylanders,” **said Attorney General Brown.** “We cannot overlook the devastating impacts of PFAS contamination on our communities. From families and communities that rely on public water systems to individuals who have experienced the detrimental effects of PFAS exposure, the urgency to finalize the proposed PFAS drinking water standards cannot be overstated. I will continue to fight for the health and well-being of our residents and the protection of our precious natural resources.”

Across the country, PFAS contamination is often found at military bases, firefighting training centers, civilian airports, and industrial facilities. PFAS chemicals tend to be persistent in the environment and have been used for decades as ingredients in firefighting foam and consumer products.

While supportive of the proposed rule, the letter also urges EPA to: (1) make technical and engineering resources available to public water systems so that the financial burden of removing PFAS does not unfairly fall on ratepayers and customers; (2) finalize the drinking water standards quickly; and (3) consider drinking water standards for other PFAS after finalizing the rule.

In its letter, the coalition asserts that “[o]ur states face substantial threats to public health and the environment from PFAS” and that “[w]e strongly support EPA’s proposed action to set national standards to protect the public from the harmful health impacts of PFAS in drinking water.”

Joining Attorney General Brown in signing the letter are the Attorneys General of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/053123.pdf>