

## **House Democrats Take Action to Protect Americans from Toxic PFAS Chemicals**

*This week, the House is voting on the PFAS Action Act, which responds to the urgent public health threat posed by per- and poly- fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) chemicals. PFAS chemicals are toxic contaminants that never break down in the environment, and the exposure to them has been widely linked to causing cancer, infertility, thyroid disease, and other serious health problems. They are referred to as “forever chemicals” and have been found in communities across the country. The PFAS Action Act is bipartisan legislation to address PFAS pollution in a comprehensive way.*

### **COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY SUFFER FROM PFAS EXPOSURE**

Communities across the country, particularly those with industrial sites and Department of Defense installations, have been exposed to PFAS pollution and are dealing with serious and costly public health challenges:

**North Carolina:** “No one told Army veteran Carter Bryant about groundwater contamination near the Chemours Fayetteville Works plant when he bought a home there in July... About two months later, Bryant said, he received a notice from Chemours stating that contaminants in his home’s well water exceed the level North Carolina considers safe to drink... The dots on the map don’t just represent contaminated wells. They represent people. Thousands of them. People who are forced to drink bottled water while waiting for Chemours to install filtration systems. People who now worry about their health and the health of their loved ones. Some of them had been unknowingly drinking contaminated water for decades.” [Charlotte Observer, [1/6/20](#)]

**West Virginia:** “PFAS have been manufactured in numerous industries for more than 70 years. Despite the dangers associated with them, they are largely unregulated in the United States. In West Virginia, they are most notoriously tied to the DuPont plant near Parkersburg, where residents were exposed to the chemical C8 for years... People living in the area experienced increased rates of testicular cancer, kidney cancer, thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis and pregnancy-induced hypertension.” [Charleston Gazette-Mail, [12/16/19](#)]

**Michigan:** “Michigan has identified more than 30 contamination sites that have tested positive for the potentially harmful class of fluorinated chemicals known as PFAS — long used in products such as Teflon, Scotchgard and firefighting foam that are resistant to water, grease or stains. The chemicals don’t break down in the environment and build up over time in blood and organs, according to EGLE...” [The Detroit News, [12/12/19](#)]

**Washington:** “Health experts will be conducting door-to-door exposures assessments for people living in Airway Heights near Fairchild Air Force Base where some of the drinking water was contaminated by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry will be conducting the assessments at households in Airway Heights west of Hayford Road since June 8, 2016 and are connected to the city’s drinking water supply system... The EPA issued a drinking water health advisory in early 2017 due harmful chemicals in the water that could cause health problems including cancer and liver damage, among others. Testing done at Fairchild AFB showed contamination in some wells bordering the base were at least 15 times higher than the range considered safe by the EPA.” [KREM 2 Spokane, [10/18/19](#)]

**Massachusetts:** “Firefighting foam from Barnes Air National Guard Base contaminated the city of Westfield’s water supply with potentially cancer-causing chemicals. Thanks to a multi-million dollar filtration system that the city’s taxpayers covered, Westfield has reduced the presence of PFAS chemicals in their water... While the water is safe to drink now, Kristin Mello, a Westfield water advocate, said the impact of the contaminated water continues. The CDC is currently assessing the long-term health impacts.” [WWLP, [9/26/19](#)]

*Office of House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, 1/9/20*

**Colorado:** “After the advisory and the discovery of widespread groundwater and soil contamination near Peterson Airforce Base, the Pikes Peak Community Foundation shut down organic vegetable production at the Venetucci farm... It’s one example of the financial burden this region still bears from the pollution, despite the \$50 million the Air Force has spent on cleanup around Peterson. ‘There are 60,000 stories just like this and they’re happening at the kitchen sink in every Fountain, Widefield and Security home,’ Clark said of the communities whose water was tainted by the foam.” [Colorado Public Radio, [7/31/19](#)]

**Delaware:** “Dover Air Force Base has been testing nearby water wells for contamination of a class of toxic chemicals called PFAS since 2014. Those tests found one contaminated well in 2016. After further tests, Air Force officials thought there were no more contaminated wells. They were wrong. New tests done last month showed four new wells east of the base had PFAS levels higher than the EPA’s standard of 70 parts per trillion.” [NPR’s State Impact, [7/17/19](#)]

**New Hampshire:** “A group of people who worked or lived at the former Pease Air Force Base say their exposure to elevated levels of PFAS chemicals caused them to suffer serious medical conditions... Thousands of people working at what is now Pease International Tradeport, along with children and infants who attended two day-cares there, were exposed to multiple PFAS chemicals from contaminated water in the city-owned Haven well until its closure in May 2014. The city closed the well after the Air Force found perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, or PFOS, at levels dramatically higher than what was then the Environmental Protection Agency’s provisional health advisory.” [Sea Coast Online, [05/30/19](#)]

**New Mexico:** “Groundwater tests at Cannon Air Force Base near Clovis showed concentrations of PFAS exceeding 26,000 nanograms per liter, or more than 300 times the federal lifetime drinking water exposure limit. In off-base wells, including those that supply drinking water to dairies, levels ranged from 25 to 1,600 nanograms per liter. The human health advisory for a lifetime drinking water exposure to PFAS is 70 parts per trillion, or 70 nanograms per liter. At Holloman, contamination levels in some wells were 18,000 times the federal health advisory for PFAS.” [New Mexico Politico Report, [03/6/19](#)]

### **THE PFAS ACTION ACT CLEANS UP PFAS POLLUTION**

This legislation packages 12 bills to address PFAS contamination and will protect American communities from harmful “forever” chemicals by:

- Ensuring the cleanup of contaminated sites under the Superfund program;
- Limiting the introduction of new PFAS chemicals;
- Establishing a health-protective drinking water standard; and
- Providing assistance to drinking water utilities treating PFAS contamination, among other provisions.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCATES SUPPORT THE PFAS ACTION ACT, DEMAND ACTION**

**Scott Faber, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs at the Environmental Working Group:** “Just days after failing to meet a PFAS deadline, the Trump administration has threatened to veto legislation that would set PFAS deadlines. It’s never been clearer that it’s time for Congress to set tough deadlines to reduce PFAS releases into the air and water, set PFAS drinking water standards, and clean up legacy PFAS pollution. If the Trump administration won’t take the necessary steps to protect the public from PFAS, it’s up to Congress to act.” [Press Release, [01/7/20](#)]

**Cathy Wusterbarth, co-leader of Need Our Water (Oscoda, Michigan):** “We have been living with toxic PFAS contamination for years. Over nine years have passed since the discovery of these toxic chemicals in our water, yet the federal government has failed to put any real plan in place to clean up the contamination and protect our water. We are demanding action. Our government must immediately clean up the plumes impacting our public beach, state campground, youth camp, and groundwater. We have suffered with this contamination for too long.” [National Wildlife Federation, [09/10/19](#)]

**Madeleine Foote, LCV Deputy Legislative Director:** “Community after community continues to discover that its drinking water, food, soil, and families are all contaminated with PFAS chemicals that have been linked to numerous health problems like cancer, thyroid disease, neurological development issues, and more. For too long, states and localities have been forced to deal with this crisis on their own while the Trump administration has dragged its feet, and it’s time that Congress force the administration to step up. To truly tackle this crisis, we must regulate and ban the entire class of PFAS chemicals, clean up the contamination, and hold polluters accountable for knowingly jeopardizing our health and the environment.” [Statement, [06/19/19](#)]

**Bart Johnsen-Harris, Clean Water Advocate at Environment for America:** “Toxic PFAS chemicals contaminate water from Michigan to North Carolina, poisoning our waterways and endangering up to 110 million Americans. Reps. Dingell, Kildee, and Upton’s PFAS Action Act would solve an important piece of this problem as we work toward a full and comprehensive solution.” [Statement, [01/18/19](#)]

***Groups who support the PFAS Action Act include:***

Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
American Association for Justice  
Buxmont Coalition for Safer Water  
Center for Environmental Health  
Clean Cape Fear.  
Clean Water Action  
Earthjustice  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Environment America  
Environmental Health Strategy Center  
Environmental Working Group  
Fight for Zero  
Gustavus PFAS Action Coalition  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
The League of Conservation Voters  
Merrimack Citizens for Clean Water  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.  
Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families  
Sierra Club  
Southern Environmental Law Center  
Toxics Action Center Campaigns  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
W.A.T.E.R. (Wake up Alaskans to the Toxic Environmental Reality)  
West Virginia Rivers Coalition  
Westfield Residents Advocating For Themselves (WRAFT)  
Your Turnout Gear and PFOA