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# Administrator Zeldin Announces Major EPA Actions to Combat PFAS Contamination

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## Contact Information

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**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin outlined upcoming agency action to address Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). In this suite of actions, Administrator Zeldin announced a long list that included in part the designation of an agency lead for PFAS, the creation of effluent limitations guidelines (ELGs) for certain PFAS to stop these forever chemicals from entering drinking water systems, and initiatives to engage with Congress and industry to establish a clear liability framework that ensures the polluter pays and passive receivers are protected. In line with Administrator Zeldin’s Powering the Great American Comeback initiative, EPA’s work in this space will advance Pillar 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American, and Pillar 3: Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, and Cross-Agency Partnership.

*“I have long been concerned about PFAS and the efforts to help states and communities dealing with legacy contamination in their backyards. With today’s announcement, we are tackling PFAS from all of EPA’s program offices, advancing research and testing, stopping PFAS from getting into drinking water systems, holding polluters accountable, and providing certainty for passive receivers. This is just a start of the work we will do on PFAS to ensure Americans have the cleanest air, land, and water,”* **said EPA Administrator Zeldin.**

These actions are guided by the following principles: strengthening the science, fulfilling statutory obligations and enhancing communication, and building partnerships. With this approach, EPA will provide the foundation and investment necessary for a toolbox that will help states and communities dealing with PFAS contamination. This list is the first, not the last, of all decisions and actions EPA will be taking to address PFAS over the course of the Trump Administration. There will be more to come in the future across EPA's program offices to help communities impacted by PFAS contamination.

### **Strengthening the Science**

- Designate an agency lead for PFAS to better align and manage PFAS efforts across agency programs
- Implement a PFAS testing strategy under Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Section 4 to seek scientific information informed by hazard characteristics and exposure pathways
- Launch additional efforts on air related PFAS information collection and measurement techniques related to air emissions
- Identify and address available information gaps where not all PFAS can be measured and controlled
- Provide more frequent updates to the PFAS Destruction and Disposal Guidance—changing from every three years to annually—as EPA continues to assess the effectiveness of available treatment technologies
- Ramp up the development of testing methods to improve detection and strategies to address PFAS

### **Fulfilling Statutory Obligations and Enhancing Communication**

- Develop effluent limitations guidelines (ELGs) for PFAS manufacturers and metal finishers and evaluate other ELGs necessary for reduction of PFAS discharges
- Address the most significant compliance challenges and requests from Congress and drinking water systems related to national primary drinking water regulations for certain PFAS
- Determine how to better use RCRA authorities to address releases from manufacturing operations of both producers and users of PFAS
- Add PFAS to the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) in line with Congressional direction from the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act

- Enforce Clean Water Act and TSCA limitations on PFAS use and release to prevent further contamination
- Use Safe Drinking Water Act authority to investigate and address immediate endangerment
- Achieve more effective outcomes by prioritizing risk-based review of new and existing PFAS chemicals
- Implement section 8(a)7 to smartly collect necessary information, as Congress envisioned and consistent with TSCA, without overburdening small businesses and article importers.
- Work with Congress and industry to establish a clear liability framework that operates on polluter pays and protects passive receivers

### **Building Partnerships**

- Advance remediation and cleanup efforts where drinking water supplies are impacted by PFAS contamination
- Work with states to assess risks from PFAS contamination and the development of analytical and risk assessment tools
- Finish public comment period for biosolids risk assessment and determine path forward based on comments
- Provide assistance to states and tribes on enforcement efforts
- Review and evaluate any pending state air petitions
- Resource and support investigations into violations to hold polluters accountable

### **A Record of Leadership**

Administrator Zeldin's leadership on PFAS dates back to his time in Congress, where he was a founding member of the PFAS Congressional Taskforce and a strong supporter of the PFAS Action Act, legislation to provide funding to support local communities cleaning up PFAS-contaminated water systems. He was, and remains, a staunch advocate for protecting Long Islanders and all Americans from contaminated drinking water.

In the process of developing and taking action on a number of these items, Administrator Zeldin personally heard from Members of Congress on passive receiver issues where local water utilities will foot the bill for contamination and pass those costs

onto consumers. This mindset and the need for a polluter pays model has guided a lot of the work to be done at EPA in the future.

## **Background**

During President Trump's first term, EPA convened a two-day National Leadership Summit on PFAS in Washington, D.C. that brought together more than 200 federal, state, and local leaders from across the country to discuss steps to address PFAS. Following the Summit, the agency hosted a series of visits during the summer of 2018 in communities directly impacted by PFAS. EPA interacted with more than 1,000 Americans during community engagement events in Exeter, New Hampshire, Horsham, Pennsylvania, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Fayetteville, North Carolina, and Leavenworth, Kansas, as well as through a roundtable in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and events with tribal representatives in Spokane, Washington.

In 2019, the Trump EPA announced the PFAS Action Plan. This historic Plan responded to extensive public interest and input the agency received and represented the first time EPA built a multi-media, multi-program, national communication and research plan to address an emerging environmental challenge like PFAS. EPA's Action Plan identified both short-term solutions for addressing these chemicals and long-term strategies that will help provide the tools and technologies states, tribes, and local communities need to provide clean and safe drinking water to their residents and to address PFAS at the source—even before it gets into the water.

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There were questions during the public hearing with the new administration about the EPA's stance on PFAS and PFAS in drinking water. The EPA's message on PFAS remains consistent across administrations.