



Overview

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that includes PFOA, PFOS, GenX, and many others. PFAS are used in a variety of consumer products including non-stick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain resistant fabrics and carpets, some cosmetics, firefighting foams, and food packaging. Studies have shown that exposure to certain PFAS can cause adverse health effects including reproductive, developmental, and organ damage, impacts on the immune system, thyroid disruption, and cancer. Some manufacturers have voluntarily phased so called long-chain PFAS, such as PFOA and PFOS, and replaced them with their short-chain cousins but early evidence suggests that these are just as harmful.

Legislation

Food Packaging

- Washington [SB 6396/HB 2658](#) (2018) and Maine [LD 1433](#) prohibit the manufacture and sale of food packaging containing PFAS and phthalate chemicals (only in Maine bill). Bills require their Departments of Environment to conduct an assessment on safer alternatives.

Firefighting Foams

- Washington [SB 6413/HB 2793](#) (2018) Prohibits the manufacture and sale of class B firefighting foam containing PFAS chemicals, with certain exceptions.

Drinking Water

- New Hampshire [SB 287](#) (2019-2020) would set maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for PFOA, PFOS, and other PFAS chemicals in drinking water at [the most protective standards](#) for drinking water in the country.

Monitoring

- Vermont [H 758](#) (2020) would create a Drinking Water Protection Fund for monitoring supplies for PFAS and other chemicals of concern in drinking water. This bill also funds treatment and remediation of contaminated drinking water and alternative water supplies.
- Rhode Island [HB 1799](#) (2018) would require Department of Health and Human Services to offer and pay for blood testing for PFAS chemicals for people exposed via private or public water supplies.

KEY POINTS

- PFAS do not breakdown naturally and can bioaccumulate in the environment and in the bodies of living organisms like humans. ([EPA](#))
- The drinking water of over six million Americans has been found to contain highly fluorinated chemicals at concentrations of concern. ([Environmental Science & Technology, 2016](#))
- Exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse health outcomes in humans. PFOA and PFOS can cause reproductive and developmental, liver and kidney, and immunological effects in laboratory animal, and both have caused tumors in animals. ([EPA](#))

Other Resources

- Safer States database of [state legislation on PFAS](#).
- Green Science Policy Institute [Consumer's Guide to Highly Fluorinated Chemicals](#).
- EPA's drinking water [health advisories](#) for PFOA and PFOS.
- CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry [list of PFAS-related contamination sites](#).
- Environmental Working Group [map of sites tested for PFAS contamination](#) in drinking water.

