

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



To: Karen Conard, City Manager

From: Al Pratt, Water Resources Manager
Brian F. Goetz, Deputy Director, Department of Public Works

Date: March 14, 2023

Subject: EPA Announcement of Proposed PFAS Regulation for Drinking Water

On March 14, 2023, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a proposed regulation that would limit acceptable levels of six Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in drinking water nationally. (<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-proposes-first-ever-national-standard-protect-communities>). This proposed rule will be open for public comment for 60 days. EPA is requesting input on the proposal from all stakeholders, including the public, water system managers, and public health professionals. Comments may be submitted through the public docket, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2022-0114, at www.regulations.gov. For more information on this proposal, please visit EPA's [Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances \(PFAS\) webpage](#).

EPA said in its announcement, if finalized, the proposed regulation will require public water systems to monitor for these chemicals. It will also require systems to notify the public and reduce PFAS contamination if levels exceed the proposed regulatory standards.

On receipt of the announcement, NHDES commented, "The proposed Federal standards are draft and will be subject to a 60-day public comment period once the draft rules are published in the Federal Register. It is anticipated that the Federal standards will be potentially revised and finalized in approximately twelve months. Once finalized, New Hampshire will have up to approximately two years to implement the new Federal rules...New Hampshire and its water supply industry lead the nation in addressing PFAS. We have a multi-prong approach that includes sampling our drinking water for PFAS, reducing exposure to PFAS, ensuring information is shared with the public and studying the latest science. We are also identifying and eliminating sources of contamination to drinking water as well as other environmental media. New Hampshire will coordinate with USEPA as the Federal regulatory process proceeds."

The City of Portsmouth has followed NHDES guidance for the past nine years and continues to comply with all standards regulating levels of PFAS in both the Portsmouth Regional and Pease International Tradeport Drinking Water Systems. Until the EPA rule is finalized, and its requirements go into effect, Portsmouth, along with all community water suppliers in New Hampshire, must continue to comply with the PFAS maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) established by the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) in 2019 for four PFAS compounds.

In anticipation of PFAS regulations by the EPA, the City had already begun feasibility assessments and preliminary designs for PFAS treatment at some supply wells that have PFAS levels that are below the state MCLs, but are above analytical method detection levels.

Please refer to the EPA website for more information about the proposed PFAS in drinking water rule.
<https://www.epa.gov/pfas/press-releases-related-pfas>

For more information on the City of Portsmouth response to PFAS go to:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/water/portsmouth-water-system-pfas-updates>