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States Forge Ahead with PFAS Regulations

As EPA dithers on setting standards for PFAS contaminants in drinking water, states are stepping in to set their own guidelines.

EPA acknowledges that its monitoring data for PFAS is flawed, but an outside group estimates that as many as a third of Americans could be drinking water contaminated with the extremely persistent, highly fluorinated chemicals that are linked to kidney and liver cancer, thyroid problems, lowered fertility and diminished effectiveness of vaccines in children. PFAS chemicals have been released into the environment by firefighting foams, certain manufacturing processes and laundering of PFAS-treated clothes. Nearly all Americans have PFAS in their blood, according to CDC.

PFAS contamination

40 states bear 172 known PFAS contamination sites, including 78 military sites. More than 1,500 drinking water systems serving as many as 110 million Americans might be contaminated with PFAS.

● PFAS contamination site

● Public water systems with detectable PFAS

Serving fewer than 30,000

Serving more than 60,000

State PFAS policies

Adopted levels lower than EPA health advisory levels

Proposed levels lower than EPA health advisory levels†

No state policies on PFAS pollution

† As of Jan. 8

Sets maximum levels ...

for PFAS contamination

Prohibits PFAS in ...

firefighting foam

* Prohibition for training only

food packaging

children's products

textiles

Requires or adopts reporting of ...

PFAS discharges

chemicals of concern

PFAS in products for children

PFAS in firefighting foam or other equipment

Requires or establishes ...

monitoring of water systems

funds for PFAS water supply or laboratory testing

rules for handling and cleanup of PFAS

health studies, including blood testing

adopting standards for PFAS contamination or in products

Liability provisions for ...

companies releasing PFAS

State purchasing guidelines ...

for avoiding PFAS

Sources: Journal of Exposure Science & Environmental Epidemiology, Safer States. Map sources: Environmental Working Group, SSEHRI at Northeastern University

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