

PFAS: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Announces Comprehensive National Strategy



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10/19/2021

United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") Administrator Michael Regan announced on October 18th what is described as a "Comprehensive National Strategy to Confront PFAS Pollution" ("Strategy").

The Strategy is outlined in a document released titled:

PFAS Strategic Roadmap: EPA's Commitments to Action

2021-2024 ("Roadmap")

PFAS consist of a large group of man-made chemicals that include perfluorooctanoic acid, perfluorooctane sulfonate, and Gen X chemicals. Their properties include resistance to heat, water, and oil. They have been described as persistent in the environment and resist degradation. Potential human exposure to PFAS includes pathways through drinking water, air, or food.

PFAS have been a subject of numerous state and federal activities over the last few years. Examples include:

- Potential designation of PFAS as a CERCLA (Superfund) hazardous substance
- Concerns about the impacts of PFAS on municipal utilities and biosolids management
- Several states setting drinking water standards for PFAS
- Research/sampling to determine the presence of PFAS in landfills
- Petition to initiate RCRA hazardous waste listing for PFAS
- State requirement for PFAS monitoring of public drinking water systems
- Litigation alleging PFAS contamination by military facilities
- Proposed Clean Water Act effluent limitations guidelines addressing PFAS
- Addition of PFAS to Toxic Release Inventory/Community Right-to-Know
- State Clean Water Act National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permitting activities related to PFAS
- State sampling of closed landfills addressing PFAS

EPA's Strategy as detailed in the *Roadmap* is based on an analysis by a "Council on PFAS" that Administrator Regan established in April 2021. The *Roadmap* is stated to be focused on three strategies which include:

- Increase investments in research

- Leverage authorities to take action now to restrict PFAS chemicals from being released into the environment
- Accelerate the cleanup of PFAS contamination

The *Roadmap* outlines a number of proposed activities:

- Aggressive timelines to set enforceable drinking water limits under the Safe Drinking Water Act to ensure water is safe to drink in every community.
- A hazardous substance designation under CERCLA, to strengthen the ability to hold polluters financially accountable.
- Timelines for action—whether it is data collection or rulemaking—on Effluent Guideline Limitations under the Clean Water Act for nine industrial categories.
- A review of past actions on PFAS taken under the Toxic Substances Control Act to address those that are insufficiently protective.
- Increased monitoring, data collection and research so that the agency can identify what actions are needed and when to take them.
- A final toxicity assessment for Gen X, which can be used to develop health advisories that will help communities make informed decisions to better protect human health and ecological wellness.
- Continued efforts to build the technical foundation needed on PFAS air emissions to inform future actions under the Clean Air Act.

The *Roadmap* identifies the various actions that are projected to be taken by EPA Divisions and the associated timelines.

A copy of the *Roadmap* can be downloaded [here](#).