AN ACT

RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- PFAS IN DRINKING WATER, GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATERS

Introduced By: Representatives Speakman, Cortvriend, Carson, Bennett, McGaw, Tanzi, Kislak, Morales, McEntee, and Knight

Date Introduced: January 28, 2022

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Title 46 of the General Laws entitled "WATERS AND NAVIGATION" is hereby amended by adding there to the following chapter:

CHAPTER 32

PFAS IN DRINKING WATER, GROUNDWATER, AND SURFACE WATERS


This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "PFAS in Drinking Water, Groundwater and Surface Waters Act."

46-32-2. Legislative findings.

It is recognized and acknowledged by the general assembly that:

(1) Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and other perfluorochemicals are a large group of human-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s.

(2) PFAS are potentially toxic to humans even in very small concentrations and pose a wide range of health threats. They are suspected to cause cancer and have been linked to growth, learning, and behavioral problems in infants and children. They can also cause problems with fertility and pregnancy; compromise immune systems; and interfere with natural hormones and with liver, thyroid, and pancreatic function. Developing fetuses and newborn babies are particularly vulnerable to PFAS.
(3) PFAS enter the environment from numerous industrial and commercial sources, including, but not limited to, air and wastewater emissions during manufacturing processes, from the disposal of wastes, goods, and products containing PFAS, and from leachate from landfills.

(4) Many PFAS do not break down and persist in the environment for a very long time, especially in water, and, consequently, PFAS can be found in many bodies of water and in the blood of humans and wildlife.

(5) United States manufacturers have voluntarily worked to reduce releases of long-chain PFAS due to their toxic effects on human health. The PFAS with fewer than eight (8) carbon-fluorine bonds currently being used as alternatives to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) are also highly persistent and subject to long-range transport. In addition, the alternative PFAS have similar potential for harm as the long-chain PFAS.

(6) Over two hundred (200) scientists from all over the world have signed a statement calling for governments to limit the use of PFAS while studies determine the safety of these chemicals, given their persistence in the environment, potential for harm, and lack of adequate data proving safety.

(7) To prevent further contamination of state water, and to reduce the potential harmful effects of PFAS on human health and the environment, the objectives of this chapter are:

(i) Authorize the department of health, in consultation with the water resources board, to adopt by rule maximum contaminant level or levels for PFAS to protect the quality and safety of the public drinking water supply in compliance with the provisions of chapter 15.3 of title 46;

(ii) Prior to adoption by rule of maximum contaminant level or levels for PFAS, require public water supply systems to monitor for certain PFAS chemicals and respond appropriately when results indicate levels or PFAS in excess of the interim drinking water standard level; and

(iii) Require the department of environmental management to adopt groundwater standards and surface water quality action levels for certain PFAS chemicals.

46-32-3. Interim drinking water standard and testing requirements.

(a) As used in this chapter, "PFAS contaminants" means perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), and perfluorohexanoic acid (PFHpA), and perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA).

(b) On or before December 1, 2022, all public water supply systems in the state as defined by § 46-13-2 shall conduct monitoring for the presence of PFAS contaminants in drinking water supplied by the system. Regular monitoring shall be conducted as follows until adoption of maximum contaminant level rules pursuant to § 46-32-4:

(1) If monitoring results detect the presence of any PFAS contaminants individually or in
(2) If monitoring results detect the presence of any PFAS contaminants individually or in combination at a level equal to or below the interim drinking water standard level or twenty parts per trillion (20 ppt), the public water supply system shall conduct continued monitoring annually.

(3) If monitoring results do not detect the presence of any PFAS contaminants, the public water supply system shall conduct continued monitoring every two (2) years.

(c) If monitoring results under subsection (b) of this section confirm the presence of any PFAS contaminants individually or in combination in excess of the interim drinking water standard level of twenty parts per trillion (20 ppt), the department of health shall direct the public water supply system to implement treatment or other remedy to reduce the levels of PFAS contaminants in the drinking water of the public water supply system below the interim drinking water standard level.

(d) On or before June 1, 2023, if the PFAS contaminants exceed the level of twenty parts per trillion (20 ppt), the public water supply system shall provide potable water through other means to all customers or users of the system. The requirement for a public water supply system to provide potable water to customers and users of the systems through other means shall cease when monitoring results indicate that the levels of PFAS contaminants in the drinking water of the public water supply system are below the interim drinking water standard level of twenty parts per trillion (20 ppt).

(e) The director of the department of health is authorized to enforce the requirements of this chapter in accordance with the provisions of chapter 13 of title 46 and violations will be subject to the penalties imposed pursuant to § 46-13-16. A person may contest or appeal a decision of the director, a penalty imposed for violation or the fact of violation pursuant to the provisions of chapter 35 of title 42 (the "administrative procedures act").


On or before June 1, 2023, the director of the department of health shall, pursuant to this section, file under § 42-35-4 a final rule with the secretary of state regarding adoption of the drinking water standard level for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA), and perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA) as a maximum contaminant level (MCL). Upon the effective date of the final rule, the drinking water monitoring provisions of § 46-32-3 may be suspended, modified, or superseded by the provisions of the final rules.

46-32-5. Standard for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances as a class or subclass.
(a) On or before February 1, 2024, the director of the department of health shall initiate a public notice and comment process by publishing a copy of the final rules and an advance notice of proposed rulemaking pursuant to § 42-35-2.5 regarding the regulation under the rules and regulations pertaining to public drinking water of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as a class or subclasses.

(b) On or before September 1, 2024, the director of the department of health shall either:

(1) Publish a notice of proposed rulemaking regarding the regulation of PFAS compounds under the rules and regulations pertaining to public drinking water as a class or subclasses; or

(2) Publish a notice of decision not to regulate PFAS compounds as a class or subclasses under the rules and regulations pertaining to public drinking water that includes, at a minimum, an identification or all legal, technical, or other impediments to regulating PFAS compounds as a class or subclasses and a detailed response to all public comments received.

(c) If the director of the department of health proposes a rule pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, the director of the department of health shall file under § 42-35-4 a final rule with the secretary of state regarding the regulation of PFAS compounds as a class or subclasses under the rules and regulations pertaining to public drinking water on or before June 30, 2025.


(a) On or before December 31, 2023, the director or the department of environmental management shall file under § 42-35-4 a final rule with the secretary of state to adopt groundwater quality standards for, at a minimum, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexanoic acid (PFHpA), and perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA) consistent with authority provided by chapter 32 of title 46.

46-32-7. Surface water quality action levels for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances.

On or before December 31, 2023, the director of the department of environmental management shall file under § 42-35-4 a final rule with the secretary of state to adopt surface water quality action levels to address the contamination of Rhode Island waters from releases of, at a minimum, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorohexanoic acid (PFHpA), and perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA).


(a) On or before November 1, 2023, the director of the department of health shall publish a plan for public review and comment to complete a statewide investigation of potential sources of
per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination. As part of this investigation, the
director of the department of health shall conduct a pilot project at public water systems to evaluate
PFAS that are not quantified by standard laboratory methods using a total oxidizable precursor
assay or other applicable analytical method to evaluate total PFAS. The director of the department
of health shall initiate implementation of the plan not later than January 1, 2023.

(b) On or before June 1, 2023, all public water systems shall conduct monitoring for the
maximum number of PFAS detectable from standard laboratory methods.


On or before December 31, 2022, the director of the department of environmental
management shall file under § 42-35-4 a final rule with the secretary of state to adopt standards and
procedures for groundwater and leachate monitoring at and around landfills including, at a
minimum, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorohexane
sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorheptanoic acid (PFHpA), and
perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA).

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.
EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N   A C T
RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION – PFAS IN DRINKING WATER,
GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATERS

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1 This act would provide for the department of health to take action to establish maximum
2 contaminant levels for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water and set
3 interim standards. The act would also provide that the department of environmental management
4 set standards for PFAS in ground and surface waters, and adopt standards for PFAS monitoring at
5 landfills.
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6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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