

May 12, 2021

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES EPA TO REQUIRE PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS TO MONITOR FOR ADDITIONAL PFAS

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 19 attorneys general, filed comments with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supporting the agency's proposal to include 29 per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, more commonly known as PFAS, in the fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 5). Through UCMR 5, the EPA will require public water systems to monitor for these substances, which will provide valuable data about the occurrence of PFAS contamination in public water supplies around the country.

While supportive of requiring public water systems to monitor for these 29 PFAS or "forever" chemicals, Raoul and the attorneys general also asked the EPA to require monitoring for total PFAS, promptly validate an analytical method for total PFAS, advance environmental justice with PFAS monitoring and lower the minimum reporting levels for the PFAS included in UCMR 5.

"So-called 'forever chemicals' pose a serious threat to public health and our environment," Raoul said. "I am calling on the EPA to strengthen regulations and require public water systems to monitor for levels of such chemicals, which will allow the EPA to better identify major sources of contamination and protect residents who rely on these systems for access to safe water."

PFAS chemicals accumulate in the body and do not break down in the environment. Those contaminants may be linked to serious adverse health effects in humans and animals, including increased serum cholesterol, immune dysregulation, pregnancy-induced hypertension, and kidney and testicular cancers. Exposure to certain types of PFAS is also associated with low birth weight in humans, suppressed immune system response, dyslipidemia, impaired kidney function and delayed onset of menstruation.

Across the country, PFAS contamination is most often associated with military bases, firefighting training centers, civilian airports and industrial facilities. PFAS chemicals tend to be persistent in the environment and have been used for decades as ingredients in firefighting foam. Some states with significant PFAS contamination are currently spending tens of millions of dollars to address the contamination in public drinking water systems and to investigate numerous areas and sources of potential contamination.

[In the letter](#), Raoul and the coalition argue that states have a strong interest in ensuring that their residents have access to safe drinking water and that there is no national requirement that all public water systems test for and remove unsafe levels of PFAS in drinking water. As a result, millions of people across the country are exposed to PFAS-contaminated drinking water and widespread releases of PFAS into the environment. Therefore, Raoul and the attorneys general state that is crucial for the EPA to broadly regulate PFAS under the Safe Drinking Water Act to protect public health and the environment.

Joining Raoul in filing the comments are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.