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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Develops Drinking Water Standards, Invests \$24 Million for Water Infrastructure and Protection from PFAS Contamination

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

12/13/2019

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

MEDIA CONTACT

Katie Gronendyke

Phone

617-626-1129 (tel:6176261129)

Online

katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us (mailto:katie.gronendyke@state.ma.us)

BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today took additional steps to protect residents and communities from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) by filing draft regulations which would establish enforceable standards for public drinking water systems based on the most up-to-date scientific data and committing \$24 million in funds for water infrastructure including statewide PFAS testing and PFAS remediation. Additionally, the Administration finalized standards for both soil and groundwater for cleanup of PFAS from contaminated sites.

“The protective standards being filed today are significant steps to protect public health from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “Through stringent standards and continued assistance to communities dealing with contamination, including funding to both test and treat affected water sources, our administration will continue to take all needed steps to address PFAS and ensure residents are provided with clean, healthy drinking water.”

“Communities are on the front-lines of protecting critical water resources and ensure residents are provided with the best possible drinking water,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “Our administration will continue to work with municipalities across the state to address PFAS, and remain steadfast in our commitment to aid in the testing and remediation of drinking water systems.”

Under the [draft regulatory proposal](#)

[\(/regulations/310-CMR-22-the-massachusetts-drinking-water-regulations\)](/regulations/310-CMR-22-the-massachusetts-drinking-water-regulations) filed by the Baker-Polito Administration, the drinking water standard for PFAS would establish a limit (known as Maximum Contaminant Level or MCL) of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) for the sum of six PFAS compounds. The draft rule also seeks to establish requirements for public water suppliers to test for PFAS and act when there is a detection above the limit. The proposed standards, with inclusion of six compounds, would cover a larger subgroup than any other state, and provide a greater degree of protection, particularly for sensitive subgroups including pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants. There are currently no federal PFAS standards for either cleanups or for drinking water.

In addition to draft drinking water standards, MassDEP has finalized [standards](#) [\(/lists/preview-of-the-final-pfas-related-revisions-to-the-mcp-2019\)](/lists/preview-of-the-final-pfas-related-revisions-to-the-mcp-2019) for both soil and groundwater for

cleanup of PFAS from contaminated sites and includes six compounds to provide a greater degree of protection. In doing so, [Massachusetts will be one of only two states with comprehensive cleanup standards for both soil and groundwater.](#) ()The standards will require parties that are responsible for contamination to clean up groundwater that could be used as drinking water to meet a standard of 20 ppt for the sum of six PFAS compounds. The cleanup standard also establishes specific PFAS limits for soils, and was developed utilizing the latest research on health effects associated with PFAS.

[“The cleanup rules announced today are designed to protect public health wherever contamination is found and provides clear guidance on what is needed to address contamination,” said Energy and Environment Secretary Kathleen Theoharides. “In addition to addressing cleanups and drinking water, the Baker-Polito Administration will continue to apply up-to-date information to develop approaches to protect the Commonwealth’s sensitive water supplies.”](#) ()

As part of the filing of draft regulations, MassDEP announced the following public hearings for residents to offer comments:

- Thursday, January 23, 2020 at 1:00p.m., at MassDEP’s Western Regional Office in Springfield, 436 Dwight Street. 413-784-1100
- Friday, January 24, 2020 at 10:00a.m., at MassDEP’s Main Office in Boston, One Winter Street, 617-292-5500
- Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 10:00a.m., at MassDEP’s Southeast Regional Office in Lakeville, 20 Riverside Drive, 508-946-2700
- Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 1:00p.m., at MassDEP’s Northeast Regional Office in Wilmington, 205 Lowell Street, 205 Lowell Street, 978-694-3200
- Friday, January 31, 2020 at 10:00a.m., at MassDEP’s Central Regional Office in Worcester, 8 New Bond Street, 508-792-7650

Comments on the draft standard will be accepted through 5:00 PM on February 28, 2020.

[To ensure the safety of drinking water around the Commonwealth, the Administration was able to secure \\$24 million in a recent supplement budget for water infrastructure and PFAS testing.](#)

As part of the effort, \$4 million will be made available for testing, and an additional \$20 million will be appropriated to the Commonwealth's Clean Water Trust, financing from which can be used by communities to address contamination issues if they are detected. These investments will add to the information currently available for which systems are affected by PFAS.

“These standards were developed using extensive testing and research, and MassDEP looks forward to implementing the new cleanup rules,” **said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg.** “We encourage the public to comment on the draft drinking water rules to help MassDEP finalize the drinking water rules in 2020.”

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances or PFAS are a family of chemicals widely used since the 1950s to manufacture common consumer products and in used fire-fighting. They have been linked to a variety of health risks, particularly in women who are pregnant or nursing, and in infants. PFAS in drinking water is an important emerging issue nationwide, as well as here in Massachusetts. For more information on PFAS in Massachusetts visit [here \(/info-details/per-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas\)](#).

MassDEP currently requires public water suppliers to test all new sources of drinking water for PFAS, including replacement sources and satellite wells and report all results.

This adds to the targeted sampling of systems near potential or known sources of PFAS done by MassDEP that has helped to identify impacted systems.

In the absence of existing state or federal standards for PFAS in biosolids, MassDEP is currently developing testing protocols and screening levels for biosolids, and requires entities that sell, distribute and apply biosolid products to test for PFAS. Additionally, MassDEP has posted a list of bottled water companies that have tested their water for PFAS which can be found [here \(/doc/bottled-water-tested-for-pfas\)](#).

In an effort to protect the environment and the public health from PFAS, MassDEP has also initiated a **[“Legacy Firefighting Foam Take-Back Program](#)**

[\(/news/statewide-program-eradicates-nearly-150000-pounds-of-toxic-firefighting-foam-to-ensure-public\)](#).”

MassDEP, in conjunction with the Department of Fire Services, has identified stockpiles of

old PFAS-containing firefighting foam and arranged for the collection and safe disposal of the foam at no cost to local fire departments. To date, 149,016 pounds of legacy foam has been collected.

“This is great news for public health in the Commonwealth,” **said Brad Campbell, president of the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF).** “I applaud Governor Baker for setting protective standards for six of the so-far unregulated toxic PFAS compounds showing up in drinking water systems throughout New England, and for giving Massachusetts cities and towns new resources in his supplemental budget to make local water supplies safe. Families should have confidence in the safety of their drinking water, and the rules announced today are a major step toward completely eliminating all of these “forever chemicals” from our water supplies and holding polluters responsible for the costs of cleanup.”

“It is great that Massachusetts is moving forward with these standards,” **said Wendy Heiger-Bernays, PhD, Clinical Professor of Environmental Health at Boston University School of Public Health.** “They are perhaps the most comprehensive and most stringent in the world.”

“I applaud the Baker-Polito Administration for their commitment to ensuring communities across the Commonwealth are able to detect, protect, and remediate PFAS contamination and for their continued work to establish standards to protect the public and our drinking supplies going forward,” **said State Representative Brad Hill (R-Ipswich).**

“Calling for stepped up regulations and investments, the Baker Administration is a critical partner in strengthening our state’s capacity to lead on these issues and move towards solutions for affected communities,” **said State Representative Kate Hogan (D-Stow).**

“This session, I have worked with Speaker DeLeo to assert the legislature’s role in building on this foundation, advancing the establishment of an interagency PFAS task force that will promote productive collaboration across state government– on best practices in treatment and testing, on a framework for resource and expertise sharing, and on closing the gap to answers for our constituents.”

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Media Contact

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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