

PFAS Pollution

HOW IT CAN BE STOPPED SO POLLUTERS PAY, NOT PEOPLE



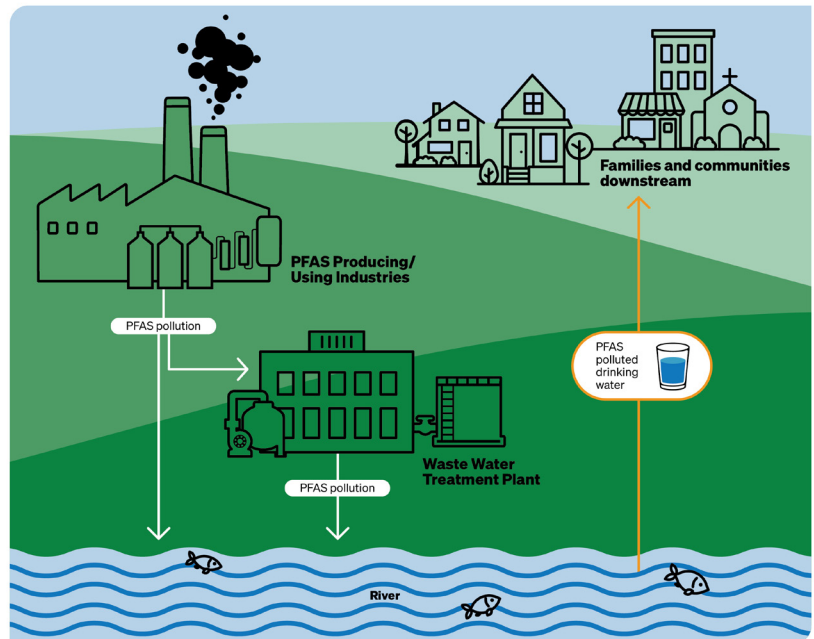
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What are PFAS?

- PFAS are a group of nearly 15,000 chemicals, including PFOA, PFOS, and GenX, that are made by industry and associated with serious health harms. These contaminants are known as forever chemicals because they do not break down in air, water, soil, or our bodies.

How does PFAS pollution happen?

- Some industries release PFAS into our rivers, creeks, and streams, and others send their waste to city wastewater treatment plants. Because neither the industry nor the wastewater plant removes PFAS from their wastewater, the toxic chemicals flow into our drinking water supplies.
- Once in rivers, PFAS can and will contaminate downstream drinking water supplies, fish, and even groundwater. Conventional water treatment does not remove PFAS from our drinking water.
- Wastewater plants also produce “sludge” during their treatment process, and that sludge is often spread on farmland. PFAS pollution from industries build up in this sludge, and once the sludge is spread on farmlands, PFAS can contaminate soil, groundwater, drinking water wells, and food supplies.



What are the health harms from PFAS pollution?

- PFAS have been linked to cancer, fetal developmental issues, immune response concerns, decreased fertility, and many other health harms.
- PFAS harm human health and contaminate our air, water and soil at incredibly low levels. EPA issued standards to limit six PFAS in drinking water, but the Trump administration is proposing to abandon four of these standards — including for GenX — and delay the remaining two standards for PFOA and PFOS.

How can toxic PFAS pollution be stopped?

- Technologies exist to remove PFAS from industrial wastewater. If industries use these technologies, the pollution would be stopped before it reaches our drinking water.
- State permitting agencies and wastewater plants have the legal responsibility to ensure industries are properly controlling their pollution at the source.
- We know this process works and is safer and cost-effective for communities. The Southern Environmental Law Center has succeeded in getting industries to stop their PFAS pollution. When polluters are held accountable, they can stop their toxic PFAS pollution from harming communities downstream.



Who pays — people or polluters?

- Communities are often the ones paying for PFAS pollution — either through their health or their utility bills. But it should not be that way. Stopping PFAS at industrial sources makes sure that polluters pay for their pollution rather than families and drinking water utilities downstream.

Take Action

- Speak out. Tell decisionmakers to enforce the law against polluters to keep our communities safe.
- Spread the word. Let your community know.
- Be aware of home filtration options. N.C. Department of Health and Human Service information on filtration is available at [PFAS Water Testing and Filtration Resources](#)



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