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Contact: GovPress@wisconsin.gov or 608-219-7443

Gov. Evers Directs DNR to Address PFAS Contamination in Drinking, Ground and Surface Waters

MADISON – Gov. Tony Evers today announced he is directing the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to take additional efforts to address perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly referred to as PFAS, in drinking, ground and surface waters.

“I am committed to protecting our state's natural resources and ensuring every Wisconsinite has access to clean drinking water,” said Gov. Evers. “In the Year of Clean Drinking Water, I’m proud that my cabinet is working with communities, citizens, and businesses to address PFAS contamination across our state.”

PFAS are a group of human-made chemicals used for decades in numerous products including non-stick cookware, fast food wrappers, stain-resistant sprays, and certain types of firefighting foam.

These legacy contaminants have made their way into the environment through accidental spills of PFAS-containing materials, discharges of PFAS-containing wastewater to treatment plants, and certain types of firefighting foams.

As part of the announcement, Gov. Evers directed the DNR to pursue rulemaking using science-based recommendations from the Department of Health Services (DHS). Today's announcement is the first step in the process for DNR amending the following administrative codes to create enforceable standards to protect public health:

- NR 105 surface water quality standards to reduce PFAS contamination in the state’s surface waters by establishing discharge limitations for certain PFAS substances.
- NR 140 to set groundwater quality standards to reduce PFAS contamination in the state’s primary source of drinking water, the state’s groundwater.
- NR 809 safe drinking water standards for public water supplies to reduce certain PFAS substances in drinking water.

Gov. Evers also directed DHS to work closely with DNR by continuing to develop the standards needed to address PFAS contamination. Members of the public and interested parties will have opportunities to provide input throughout this process.

“We cannot live without clean drinking water. It is too important for the human existence,” said DNR Secretary-designee Preston Cole. “We are fortunate to be working with DHS and will be in collaboration with them for this most important crisis. There is no substitute for clean drinking water.”

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