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EPA Adds New PFAS Treatment Options and Scientific References to Drinking Water Treatability Database

Update advances Trump Administration's aggressive plan to address PFAS, provides tools to state and local governments to help address PFAS

DALLAS(July 15, 2020) — Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced an update to its Drinking Water Treatability Database with new treatment options and scientific references for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). This update is another example of the Trump Administration delivering on an important commitment under EPA's first-of-its-kind PFAS Action Plan. The database update will further help states, tribes, and local governments, as well as water utilities, make better decisions to manage PFAS in their communities.

"The latest addition of four PFAS compounds and 20 new scientific references to the Drinking Water Treatability Database increases our depth of scientific knowledge on this emerging chemical of concern. The update serves as an important tool for states, tribes and communities across the country as they can now use these new treatment technologies to better protect public health and manage PFAS in drinking water," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler.

In this most recent update, EPA added treatment and contaminant information about four new PFAS compounds. This update brings the total number of PFAS compounds in the database to 26, including PFOA and PFOS. Researchers have also added 20 new scientific references to the existing PFAS entries, which increases the depth of scientific knowledge available in the database. The four new PFAS compounds are:

- Difuoro(perfluoromethoxy) acetic acid, also known as Perfluoro-2-methoxyacetic acid
- Perfluoro-3,5-dioxahexanoic acid
- Perfluoro-3,5,7-trioxaoctanoic acid
- Perfluoropropane sulfonate

The Drinking Water Treatability Database presents an overview of the properties of different contaminants and possible treatment processes to remove them from drinking water. Water utility managers, water treatment experts, states, tribes, local governments, researchers, and others can use this new and updated information to help treat PFAS in drinking water systems to protect the health of communities across the nation.

The information included in the database is supported by scientific references, such as journal articles, conference proceedings, reports, and webinars with treatability data. The release of this information continues to address the challenges laid out in the PFAS Action Plan.

About PFAS

PFAS are a large group of man-made chemicals composed of one or more carbon atoms on which all hydrogen substituents have been replaced with fluorine atoms. The compounds are used in consumer

products and industrial processes. In use since the 1940s, PFAS are resistant to heat, oils, stains, grease, and water—properties which contribute to their persistence in the environment.

The agency's PFAS Action Plan is the first multi-media, multi-program, national research, management, and risk communication plan to address a challenge like PFAS. The plan responds to the extensive public input the agency has received between 2018 – 2019 during the PFAS National Leadership Summit, multiple community engagements, and through the public docket. The PFAS Action Plan outlines the tools EPA is developing to assist states, tribes, and communities in addressing PFAS.

EPA continues to make progress under its PFAS Action Plan to protect the environment and human health. To date, EPA has:

Highlighted Action: Drinking Water

- In December 2019, EPA published a new validated method to accurately test for 11 additional PFAS in drinking water.
    - EPA's new validated Method 533 focuses on "short chain" PFAS, those PFAS with carbon chain lengths of four to 12. Method 533 complements EPA Method 537.1 and the agency can now measure 29 chemicals.
- In February 2020, EPA proposed to regulate perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) in drinking water. The comment period on these preliminary determinations closed on June 10, 2020 and the agency received over 11,000 comments. The agency will review and consider comments received on this action then take the next appropriate steps.
    - EPA also asked for information and data on other PFAS substances, as well as seeking comment on potential monitoring requirements and regulatory approaches EPA is considering for PFAS chemicals.

Highlighted Action: Cleanup

- On December 19, 2019, EPA issued *Interim Recommendations for Addressing Groundwater Contaminated with PFOA and PFOS*, which provides cleanup guidance for federal cleanup programs that will be helpful to states and tribes.
- EPA has initiated the regulatory development process for listing perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Highlighted Action: Monitoring

- Consistent with our commitment in the PFAS action plan, EPA will propose nationwide drinking water monitoring for PFAS under the next UCMR monitoring cycle (UCMR 5) utilizing newer methods available to detect more PFAS chemicals and at lower minimum reporting levels (MRLs) than previously possible in earlier monitoring.
- Monitoring results will improve understanding of the frequency and concentration of PFAS occurrence in finished U.S. drinking water.

Highlighted Action: Toxics

- In September 2019, EPA issued an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking that would allow the public to provide input on adding PFAS to the Toxics Release Inventory toxic chemical list.
- In May 2020, EPA issued a final regulation that added a list of 172 PFAS chemicals to Toxics Release Inventory reporting as required by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020.
- In June 2020, EPA issued a final regulation that can stop products containing PFAS from entering or reentering the marketplace without EPA's explicit permission.

Highlighted Action: Surface Water Protection

- EPA is exploring data availability and research to support the development of Clean Water Act human health and aquatic life criteria for certain PFAS, as data allows.
- EPA is examining available information about PFAS released into surface waters by industrial sources to determine if additional study is needed for potential regulation.

Highlighted Action: Biosolids

- EPA is in the early scoping stages of risk assessments for PFOA and PFOS in biosolids to understand any potential health impacts.

Highlighted Action: Scientific Leadership

- On November 22, 2019, EPA announced availability of $4.8 million in funding for new research on managing PFAS in agriculture.
- EPA continues to compile and assess human and ecological toxicity information on PFAS to support risk management decisions.
- EPA continues to develop new methods to test for additional PFAS in drinking water.
- The agency is also validating analytical methods for surface water, groundwater, wastewater, soils, sediments and biosolids; developing new methods to test for PFAS in air and emissions; and improving laboratory methods to discover unknown PFAS.
- EPA is developing exposure models to understand how PFAS moves through the environment to impact people and ecosystems.
- EPA is working to develop tools to assist officials with the cleanup of contaminated sites.
- In May 2020, EPA announced that it is expanding its research efforts and capabilities by launching its PFAS Innovative Treatment Team (PITT).
- In July 2020, EPA adds new treatment methods for removing PFAS in drinking water.

Highlighted Action: Enforcement

- EPA uses enforcement tools, when appropriate, to address PFAS exposure in the environment and assists states in enforcement activities.
- EPA has already taken actions to address PFAS, including issuing Safe Drinking Water Act orders and providing support to states. *See examples in the PFAS Action Plan*.
- In May 2020, EPA and Swix Sport USA finalized an agreement resolving Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) violations associated with the importation of noncompliant ski wax products containing PFAS.

Highlighted Action: Risk Communications

- EPA is working collaboratively to develop a risk communication toolbox that includes multi-media materials and messaging for federal, state, tribal, and local partners to use with the public.

About the Drinking Water Treatability Database

The Drinking Water Treatability Database contains information on a wide range of different contaminants, not just PFAS. EPA researchers continue to expand and improve information in the database.

For more information on EPA's Drinking Water Treatability Database and to access it, visit: https://www.epa.gov/water-research/drinking-water-treatability-database-tdb

Learn more about EPA's PFAS research: https://www.epa.gov/chemical-research/research-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas

For more information on the PFAS Action Plan: https://www.epa.gov/pfas/epas-pfas-action-plan

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