

Deploy drinking water treatment to combat PFAS

Funding treatment systems for drinking water will reduce Minnesotans' exposure to "forever chemicals."

Challenge

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a family of more than 5,000 chemicals that are now pervasive in the environment. Called "forever chemicals," they don't break down and have accumulated in water, soils, humans, and other living organisms. Many PFAS can cause health problems, even at low levels.

Within the next year, the U.S. EPA is expected to finalize new drinking water standards for two PFAS: PFOA and PFOS. Once the EPA's new standards are finalized, some public water systems in Minnesota will exceed the standards. The systems may need to make operational changes, install treatment technology, or find alternative sources of drinking water to comply with federal rules. The MPCA will need to investigate the sources of PFAS contamination, identify any responsible parties, and study potential impacts on private wells. Current funding levels are not sufficient to support the needed work.



Proposal

Governor Walz is recommending a \$25 million appropriation from the General Fund in FY2024 to support the planning, design, and bidding of public drinking water treatment systems to combat PFAS contamination. The MPCA will also use the funds for testing and installing treatment on private wells and investigating sources of PFAS contamination to drinking water wells.

Why it's important

The overwhelming consensus of scientists and environmental professionals is that significant actions are needed to prevent adverse impacts from PFAS. State agencies collaborated to develop the Minnesota PFAS Blueprint to address the many risks posed by the chemicals, including drinking water contamination. Contaminated drinking water is a significant way that people can be exposed to PFAS and should be prioritized for mitigation and treatment.

For more information

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