

**TESTIMONY OF  
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BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT  
REGARDING PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES**

**SEPTEMBER 6, 2018**

Good morning, Chairman Shimkus, Ranking Member Tonko, and members of the Subcommittee. I am Peter Grevatt, Director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water. I also serve as the chair of the EPA's cross-agency efforts to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Protecting America's drinking water is one of the EPA's top priorities. I am here today to share with you the actions the agency is taking to provide states, tribes, and communities with the tools they need to effectively address PFAS.

**BACKGROUND**

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that have been in use since the 1940s, and are (or have been) found in a wide array of consumer products like cookware, food packaging, and stain repellants. PFAS have also been used in aqueous film-forming foams. PFAS manufacturing and processing facilities, airports, and military installations that use firefighting foams are some of the contributors of PFAS releases into the air, soil, and water, including sources of drinking water. There are many PFAS chemicals, including the

chemicals perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), and GenX (HFPO dimer acid).

Because of their widespread use, most people have been exposed to PFAS. Some PFAS can accumulate and can stay in the human body for long periods of time. There is evidence that exposure to certain PFAS may lead to adverse health effects.

### **EPA'S WORK ON PFAS**

The EPA has taken steps under its statutory authorities to understand and address these chemicals. For example, certain PFAS chemicals are no longer manufactured in the United States as a result of the EPA's PFOA Stewardship Program in which eight major chemical manufacturers agreed to phase out the use of PFOA and PFOA-related chemicals in their products and as emissions from their facilities. All companies met the PFOA Stewardship Program goals by 2015. In support of this effort, through the EPA's work under the Toxic Substances Control Act, the agency has issued various significant new use rules (SNURs) to guard against the unreviewed reintroduction and new use, through domestic production or import, of certain PFAS chemicals in the United States. However, the SNUR authority did not cover ongoing uses such as low-volume use of some PFAS in limited industrial applications.

The EPA has also worked with the states and local communities to monitor for six PFAS under the Safe Drinking Water Act to understand the nationwide occurrence of these chemicals in our drinking water systems. In 2016, the EPA issued drinking water lifetime health advisories for PFOA and PFOS of 70 parts per trillion individually or combined. The health advisories are non-regulatory values that help to provide technical information to state agencies and other public

health officials on the level of PFOA and PFOS that would provide Americans, including the most sensitive populations, with a margin of protection from a lifetime of exposure to PFOA and PFOS from drinking water. The EPA is also working to move research forward on other PFAS to better understand their health impacts, options for treatment, and how information on better-known PFAS (such as PFOA and PFOS) can be applied to inform our knowledge of other PFAS chemical classes.

To build on these actions, the EPA hosted a PFAS National Leadership Summit in May 2018 that brought together state, tribal, and federal partners, as well as key stakeholders including industry, utilities, Congressional staff, and nongovernmental organizations. The Summit provided an opportunity to share information on ongoing efforts, to identify specific near-term actions, and to address risk communication challenges.

At the event, the EPA committed to work on four significant actions:

1. Initiating the steps to evaluate the need for a Safe Drinking Water Act maximum contaminant level for PFOA and PFOS.
2. Beginning the necessary steps to consider designating PFOA and PFOS as “hazardous substances” through one of the available statutory mechanisms, including potentially CERCLA Section 102.
3. Considering groundwater cleanup recommendations for PFOA and PFOS at contaminated sites.
4. Working in close collaboration with federal and state partners to develop draft toxicity values for GenX (HFPO dimer acid) and for perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS).

The EPA also continues to provide support to states, tribes, and communities who are addressing PFAS issues. For example, at the request of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, the EPA continues to perform independent laboratory analysis for GenX and several other PFAS compounds in water samples collected along the Cape Fear River. In Michigan, the EPA is providing technical assistance to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality as the state responds to PFAS contamination in communities such as Parchment.

As the EPA takes these actions, the agency is also committed to working with our federal partners, including the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services, on response actions and continuing research into the health and environmental impacts of these substances. For example, the EPA is coordinating with its federal agency partners as the agency develops draft toxicity values for GenX and PFBS. Interagency coordination is key to providing a common Federal approach to addressing these substances in order to best support our state, local, and tribal partners as well as the public. We look forward to continuing to our interagency dialogue and collaboration on PFAS issues.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The EPA recognizes the need to hear directly from communities that have been and/or continue to feel the impact of PFAS. Since June, the EPA has traveled to Exeter, New Hampshire; Horsham, Pennsylvania; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Fayetteville, North Carolina; and Leavenworth, Kansas. The EPA also engaged with tribal representatives at the Tribal Lands and Environment Forum in Spokane, Washington. At these events, the EPA has engaged with nearly a thousand individuals, including more than 150 people who delivered remarks about their personal experiences. We listened to these community members to better understand their

concerns and to learn from them ways that the agency can best support the work being done at the state, local, and tribal levels. The EPA is also seeking recommendations from state and local officials through the agency's Local Government Advisory Committee. Hearing directly from impacted communities has been invaluable, and community feedback will shape how we move forward on this important issue.

To ensure that everyone who would like to provide input can do so, the EPA has set up a public docket that will remain open until September 28, 2018. The EPA will consider information from the National Leadership Summit, community engagements, and the public docket to develop a PFAS Management Plan. The Management Plan is expected to include actions that the EPA will take to provide tools that states, tribes, and communities can use to address PFAS.

## **CONCLUSION**

Protecting public health is the EPA's top priority. Acting Administrator Wheeler has expressed his continued commitment to considering actions on PFAS so that the EPA can lead efforts that meet the needs of impacted communities.

Once again, Chairman Shimkus, Ranking Member Tonko, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss PFAS and the EPA's ongoing commitment to working to find solutions to address these chemicals. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.