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Northeastern University
*Social Science Environmental Health
Research Institute*

What's New with PFAS - August 2018



About SSEHRI's PFAS lab group:

The mission of the Social Science Environmental Health Research

This is the third edition of a

community engagement, and policy work in the area of environmental health.

SSEHRI's NSF-funded research investigates the discovery and re-discovery of per- and polyfluorinated chemicals (or PFASs), a class of carbon-fluorine-based chemicals widely used in industrial production and found in numerous consumer products. Exposure to certain PFASs has been linked to various human health effects, including immunodeficiencies, thyroid disorders, elevated cholesterol, birth defects, and some cancers. This project seeks to understand the confluence of actors and conditions necessary for the periodic discoveries of the health and environmental impacts of these chemicals. Additionally, this project will focus on how contamination episodes in three locations have impacted the awareness, regulation and research related to this class of chemicals.

Read more about the PFAS project [on our website](#).

provide overviews of the latest developments in PFAS science, regulation, events, and activism. It features contributions from various PFAS-related research groups, environmental advocacy organizations, and activist groups.

Queries and suggestions can be directed to our email: pfasproject@gmail.com

Join the mailing list for this newsletter [here](#).

UPDATES FROM THE FIELD:

Silent Spring Institute:

Laurel Schaider published a guest [blog post](#) for the Union of Concerned Scientists on ATSDR's draft toxicological profile for PFASs and implications for drinking water contamination. She was also quoted in an article in [Environmental Health News](#) that discussed 3M's efforts to withhold information about PFAS health effects. Researchers from Silent Spring Institute attended the recent Joint Annual Meeting of the International Society of Exposure Science and International Society of Environmental Epidemiology in Ottawa, including an organohalogen workshop organized by Green Science Policy Institute.



SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE
Researching the Environment and Women's Health

National PFAS Contamination Coalition:

In the midst of holding four regional summits over the course of 6 weeks, EPA Administrator Pruitt resigned due to various corruption scandals and ethics violations. The National PFAS Contamination Coalition issued a [statement](#) directing the new EPA administrator to prioritize PFAS-contaminated communities and to ensure that bold and strong clean up is taken.

NATIONAL PFAS CONTAMINATION COALITION*Community groups fighting drinking water contamination fighting back*

Citizens for Safe Water around Badger:

In September 2017, CSWAB successfully petitioned the Wisconsin DNR to start the process for establishing enforceable groundwater standards for two common forms of PFAS – PFOA and PFOS. The petition was forwarded to toxicologists with the Wisconsin Division of Public Health and an interim drinking water health advisory level is expected by early 2019. The rule-making process for enforceable groundwater and drinking water standards normally takes several years. However, even without these standards in place, the State has [authority](#) to require cleanup and remediation of PFAS and other unregulated contaminants.

Among the priority sites in Wisconsin are Mitchell Air Force Base (Milwaukee), Truax Field (Madison), Volk Field (Camp Douglas) and Fort McCoy (Sparta) where high levels of PFAS have been detected in soils and groundwater. The suspected source at these sites is aqueous film-forming foams (AFFF) containing PFAS which has been used by the Department of Defense for over 40 years for suppressing liquid fuel fires, fire-training exercises and other emergency fire response activities.

The WI Department of Natural Resources has announced that it has established an internal workgroup to help determine the scope of the problem and best courses of action in response to PFAS – emerging contaminants that threaten the State's drinking water sources and fresh water fisheries. <https://cswab.org/wdnr-to-prioritize-pfas-threat-to-state-waters/>



STEEP Superfund Research Program:

After a considerable delay, the revised ATSDR ToxProfile for PFASs was released in late June. The draft contained numerous updates, and recommends MRLs for PFOS and PFOA that were several-fold below those previously recommended by the EPA (calculated water limits of 7 ng/L and 11 ng/L for PFOS and PFOA, respectively). The authors had reviewed more than 600 scientific reports, of which more than 400 were human studies. Nonetheless, ATSDR chose to rely on experimental animal evidence, a decision that was criticized in the 21-page comment submitted by STEEP, based on suggestions from 18 STEEP faculty and trainees. The STEEP comments are available [here](#).

Please click the photo below for more information on STEEP activities.



Green Science Policy Institute:

Tom Bruton and Arlene Blum held a “Lunch and Learn on PFAS” with Senate and House staff on August 31 in support of efforts on the Hill to address the problem of PFAS in drinking water. One topic of discussion was an amendment to the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 that would give civilian airports the freedom to choose firefighting foams without PFAS. Current rules require airports to use PFAS-containing foams, while airports outside the U.S. are increasingly using safer alternatives. Contaminated drinking water linked to use of firefighting foams at military and civilian airports is a major source of exposure to these harmful “forever chemicals”. The House of Representatives passed the measure in March, and the Senate is expected to consider it soon.

Prior to that, Tom and Arlene held a workshop on Science and Policy of Organohalogenes, including PFAS, at the ISES-ISEE meeting in Ottawa. Speakers included Linda Birnbaum, Miriam Diamond, and Tony Fletcher. Workshops such as these are part of our strategy to mobilize scientists to produce policy-relevant research for reducing the use of toxics.

A piece on PFAS from our monthly newsletter is [here](#). To subscribe and receive updates on toxics and reducing harm, write arlene@GreenSciencePolicy.org.



Toxics Action Center:

Vermont recently updated its groundwater standards for PFAS to be 20ppt for a max of 5

state is anticipating a significant response from polluters including a lawsuit from Saint Gobain. Toxics Action Center collected well over 300 public comments on the Investigation and Remediation of Contaminated Properties Rule and Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy to give Vermont the cover it needs to stand strong against big polluters and to uphold our stronger drinking water standards of these chemicals.

And from the Coalition, if you can't get in touch with Laura, you can say something like

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IN THE NEWS:

- [When it makes sense to pollute -- and how to change the equation](#) (Chicago Booth Review)
- [PFAS found in drinking water for 1.5 million in Michigan](#) (MLive)
- [New PFAS Legislation aims to improve detection, spur cooperation between federal and state governments](#) (StateImpact Pennsylvania)
- [San Francisco bans single-use food service ware containing PFASs](#) (Chemical Watch)
- [Removing toxic fluorinated chemicals from your family's tap water](#) (EWG)
- [El Paso County Residents beg EPA, "When will we start putting human health above corporate profits?"](#) (The Gazette)
- [N.C. Policy Collaboratory launches new statewide study on GenX with \\$5 million state appropriation](#) (UNC Chapel Hill)
- [Questions prevail after EPA GenX meeting](#) (North Carolina Health