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PFAS-FREE NY POLICY AGENDA 2026

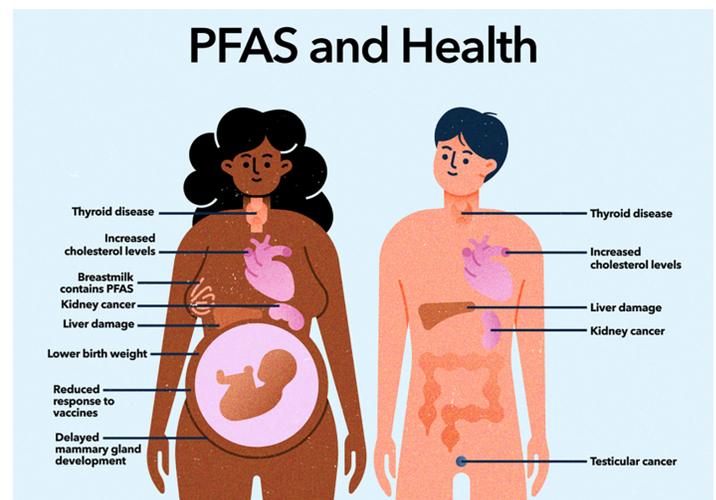
Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large class of tens of thousands of synthetic chemicals that are widely used for their oil and water repellency, temperature resistance, and friction reduction. However, they have been linked to a variety of serious health effects, including kidney and testicular cancer, thyroid disease, decreased fertility, and a decreased response to vaccines.¹ These toxic chemicals are found virtually everywhere: in air, soil, water, food, plants, wildlife, and the bodies of people.

PFAS enters our environment when products with PFAS are produced, used, and disposed of. For example, PFAS are released to the environment when industrial waste is discharged into surface water or wastewater systems; when industrial emissions are released into the air and subsequently deposited into water and soils; when cleaning and personal care products are washed down household drains; when PFAS-laden consumer products are landfilled or incinerated; when contaminated landfill leachate seeps into ground and surface waters; and when contaminated sewage sludge is spread on agricultural lands.

For many people, the primary exposure to PFAS is through drinking water; it is estimated that at least 45 percent of the nation’s drinking water supplies are contaminated with PFAS.² In New York State, a concerning number of public water systems have reported the presence of PFOA or PFOS (types of PFAS chemicals) since monitoring began in the state in 2020.³ In addition, state investigations at inactive landfills have determined that 68 percent of the studied landfills have PFAS concentrations above state action levels. Landfills are concerning sources of drinking water contamination, particularly for New Yorkers who get their water from private wells that use groundwater near these sites.⁴

New York already faces tremendous costs in addressing contaminated drinking water across the state. An analysis conducted by NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) found that drinking water utilities and the U.S. Department

of Defense have already spent \$436 million to clean up PFAS in New York and are planning to spend more than \$1 billion more.⁵ But this is only the beginning. Health-care costs related to PFAS contamination in New York are conservatively estimated to range between \$2.7 and \$4.4 billion annually, and the expected costs to clean up PFAS to a level that meets federal drinking water standards are estimated to be \$32–\$54 million annually.⁶ The majority of these costs are borne by the public, from expenses associated with health harms to increased water utility bills and the use of taxpayer monies to cover massive cleanup costs for water systems, military sites, and landfills.⁷



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ESSENTIAL WORK FOR PFAS-FREE NY IN 2026

Supporters of the PFAS-Free NY campaign support the following package of bills that if passed will result in statewide protections to human health and the environment. As is already being done in several other states, New York must tackle upstream sources of PFAS used in consumer and household products, manage PFAS discharges and emissions, and clean up PFAS downstream in drinking water bodies and on farmland. Multiple pieces of legislation targeting different stages of the PFAS life cycle—from production and use to disposal, release, and cleanup—are needed to address the crisis.

1. PFAS IN CONSUMER AND HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS (A.7738/S.9073)

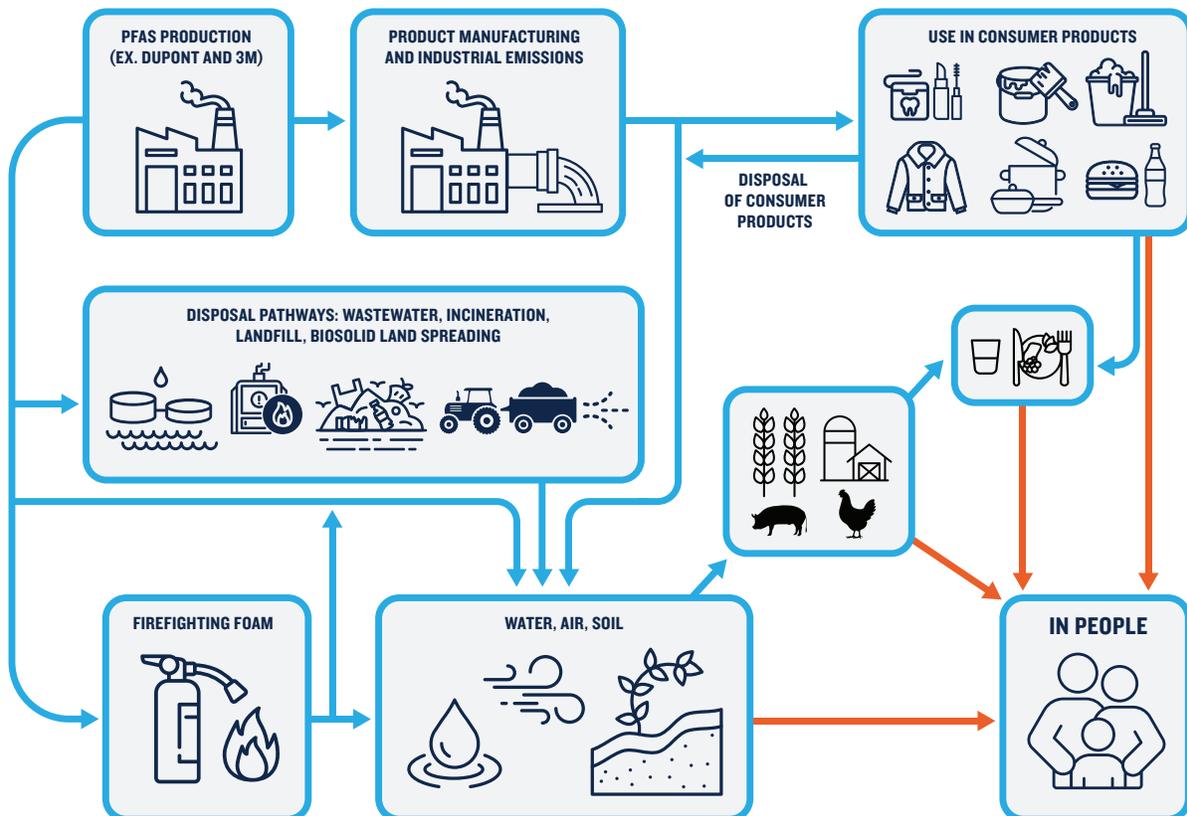
PFAS can be found in a tremendous array of consumer and household products, and regular use of these products puts New Yorkers at risk. This bill addresses these exposure pathways by phasing out the sale of products that intentionally add PFAS (such as some types of textiles, rugs, dental floss, nonstick cookware, ski waxes, household paint, children’s products, and cleaning supplies). The use of PFAS in these products is unnecessary as safer, cost-effective alternatives are already available. Not only is the use of PFAS in these consumer products a concern for direct

human exposure, but these consumer and household products ultimately end up in landfills or in wastewater, contributing to downstream problems like contaminated drinking water, soil, and sewage sludge. Several states within the past few years have enacted legislation to phase out intentionally added PFAS in these consumer products, including Connecticut, Minnesota, Maine, and Vermont.⁸ In California, the legislature passed a bill to phase out PFAS in cookware.⁹

2. BEAUTY JUSTICE ACT (A.2054-A/S.2057-A)

This bill phases out PFAS and other toxic chemicals found in a wide variety of personal care and cosmetic products that New Yorkers use every day. Some of these toxic chemicals are linked to asthma, allergies, hormone disruption, neurodevelopmental problems, infertility, and cancer, and women of color are generally disproportionately impacted.¹⁰ Not only do these products pose health concerns when used on the body, but many of the chemicals they contain, including PFAS, end up being washed down drains.¹¹ When these chemicals enter the wastewater system, it puts further strain on efforts to filter PFAS out of drinking water supplies. Other states have already passed similar laws to restrict PFAS and other chemicals in personal care products and cosmetics, including California, Colorado, Minnesota, Washington, Maine, Vermont, Oregon, Connecticut, and Illinois.¹²

PFAS Life Cycle and Sources





3. MORATORIUM ON THE LAND APPLICATION OF SEWAGE SLUDGE (A.10138/S.9115)

PFAS end up in wastewater and sewage treatment facilities when PFAS-containing waste from residential, commercial, and industrial uses is flushed into wastewater drains. Sewage treatment does not break down persistent chemicals like PFAS, and often the remaining sewage sludge is recycled into fertilizer, which then may contain concentrated levels of PFAS.¹³ About half of the treated sewage waste generated in the United States is spread on land, including agricultural cropland and dairy land, for disposal. This legislation is critical to protect New York farmland and food systems from PFAS contamination.

4. PFAS DISCHARGE DISCLOSURE ACT (A.5832-B/S.4574-B)

Certain permitted industrial facilities (including chemical manufacturing, textile mills, pulp and paper manufacturing, and plastics production) and sewage treatment plants are known or suspected to discharge PFAS into the environment through wastewater effluent. But there is a lack of comprehensive testing to identify which particular facilities are major polluters and which water bodies across the state are at risk. This legislation will provide transparency by expanding testing for PFAS in discharges at certain permitted industrial facilities, wastewater treatment plants, and industries sending waste directly to sewage treatment plants. The public has a right to know whether their water is being contaminated with PFAS, and occurrence data will aid policymakers in developing future regulations to ultimately limit and eliminate these discharges.

5. CODIFICATION OF FEDERAL PFAS MCLS (A.8634/S.3207-A)

In 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized the first-ever federal limits on PFAS in drinking water by setting maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) of 4 parts per trillion (ppt) each for PFOA and PFOS.¹⁴ These limits are more health-protective than New York’s current 10 ppt MCLs. The EPA also established standards for four other PFAS chemicals (PFNA, PFHxS, GenX, and PFBS) that are currently unregulated in New York. With the Trump administration now rolling back these critical drinking water protections, more than a million New Yorkers are at risk of prolonged exposure to toxic PFAS when they turn on the tap.¹⁵ This bill will ensure that New York maintains the current, science-based federal PFAS limits and that New Yorkers’ health remains protected.

PFAS Free NY is a campaign organized by a broad group of advocates and impacted community members who have come together to fight for a PFAS-free New York. Supporters of the campaign include: Adirondack Council, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Clean Air Action Network of Glens Falls, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, Clean+Healthy, Earthjustice, Environmental Advocates NY, Environmental Working Group, Freshwater Future, Just Green Partnership, NAACP NYS Environmental Committee, Natural Resources Defense Council, Newburgh Clean Water Project, New York State Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, New York League of Conservation Voters, New York Sustainable Business Council, Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, PFOA Project NY, Riverkeeper, Rockland Water Coalition, Save the Sound, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, Sterling Water Stewards, WeACT for Environmental Justice, and Weaving Voices for Health & Justice.

Website: www.PFASFreeNY.org
 Instagram: www.instagram.com/pfasfreeny
 X: x.com/PFASfreeNY
 Linktree: linktr.ee/pfasfreeny



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ENDNOTES

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