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*Luchando por la Liberación Ambiental*



**EARTHJUSTICE**  
BECAUSE THE EARTH NEEDS A GOOD LAWYER



**SOUTHERN  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
LAW CENTER**

# “FOREVER TOXIC CHEMICALS” In Our Water: PFAS Response Toolkit



**JUNE  
2021**

# INTRODUCTION

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## The PFAS Contamination Crisis

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are a class of human-made chemicals that are linked to myriad cancers and human endocrine disruption. They are typically found in common household products and are nearly indestructible. This is why they have become prevalent in our land, air, and water and more than 95 percent of the U.S. population have these chemicals in their bodies. These emerging contaminants pose a danger to our drinking water and air. All families and individuals have a fundamental right to clean water, yet many low income communities and communities of color cannot trust that their water source is safe.

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify contaminants to regulate drinking water and protect public health. EPA has the authority to set limits to pollution and can require monitoring of U.S. public water supplies. However, EPA has not yet used its existing authority to set limits for PFAS in drinking water.

The Clean Water Act provides powerful tools to control PFAS, including a blanket prohibition on any discharges unless approved by a permitting agency. EPA and state agencies are not enforcing the law. The Act also gives the EPA the authority to set nationwide standards for minimum controls. We need EPA and state agencies to use existing authority and take stronger enforcement measures to improve water quality, equity, and access to safe, affordable drinking water for all communities.

## Tackle America's Overwhelming PFAS Problem

Contact your Member of Congress to protect clean water. Prevent further PFAS exposure in your community by supporting immediate action to stop PFAS pollution at the source. Urge legislators to co-sponsor [H.R. 3622 / S. 1907](#) the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021, a bill that will improve water quality and prevent PFAS from entering our water supply. This toolkit was created to help advocates educate and engage legislators about PFAS. Below are resources to explore including tactics to support power-building efforts that lead to policy change.

## PFAS Response Toolkit

In this toolkit, you'll find:

- Overview of PFAS and how it impacts drinking water and health
- Talking points on the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021
- Phone call script and legislative targets list
- Letter to the editor templates
- Sample graphics and social media messages

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**“These toxics typically found in common household products are nearly indestructible and pose a danger to our land, water, air, and health.”**

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# ABOUT PFAS

## General Overview

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a class of synthetic chemicals associated with detrimental human health and environmental impacts. These contaminants are known as forever chemicals—they do not dissipate, dissolve, or degrade but stay in water, soil and our bodies. There are thousands of types of PFAS, including PFOA, PFOS, and GenX.

According to the EPA, these chemicals have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries since the 1940's and as a result, are found in food, food packaging, plastics, cookware, stain repellents, household cleaning products, production and industrial facilities, drinking water, and living organisms.

Though PFOA and PFOS have largely been phased out by industry, they were replaced by other forms of harmful PFAS and persist in our environment. Because these chemicals are ubiquitous, many sources of drinking water across the country are contaminated with PFAS.

Localized contamination from specific facilities can result in particularly high concentrations and pose dangers to human health. EPA finds exposure to these chemicals are linked to cancer, thyroid hormone disruption, and impacts on the immune system.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) helped track and map PFAS contamination in U.S. public and private waterways, identifying 2,337 contaminated sites in 49 states as of January 2021. To explore threats from PFAS to your locality and other contaminated areas, view EWG's interactive map [HERE](#).

Fortunately, many organizations and states are working tirelessly to address this contamination. However, congressional action on PFAS is necessary to fully clean-up our waterways, protect our drinking water, and restore our health and environment.

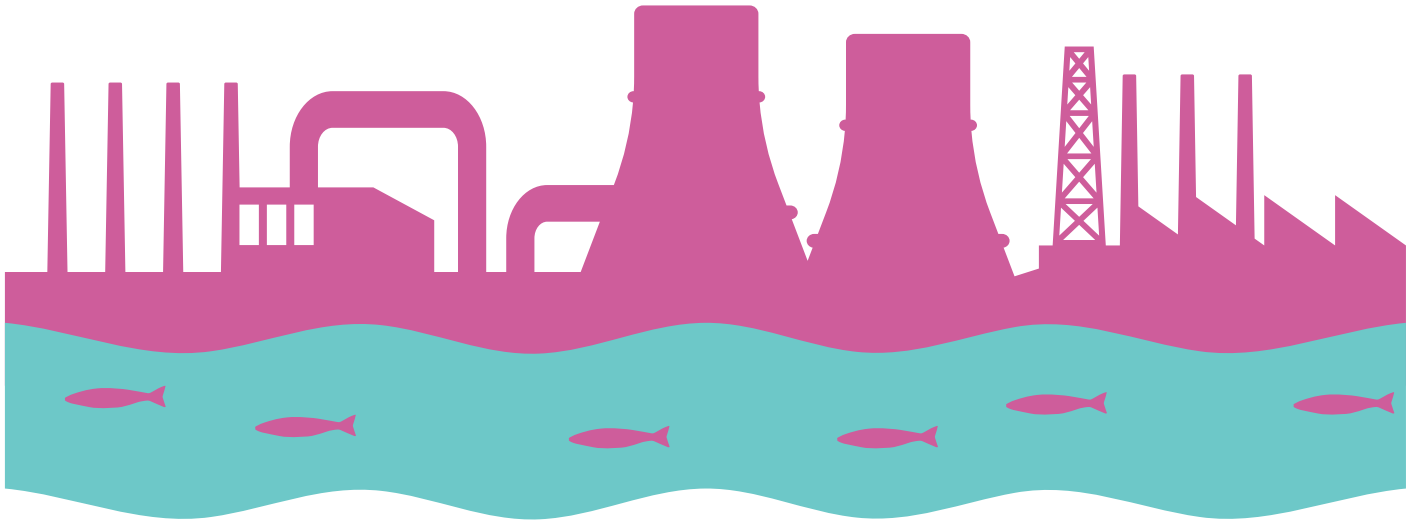
EPA signaled that it is considering setting limits for some PFAS in drinking water, but there remains much work to be done. Recently, EPA announced intent to reissue final regulatory determinations for two types of PFAS, PFOA and PFOS, under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Unfortunately, other PFAS chemicals will continue to go unregulated, exacerbating harm to our environment and health.



**"Fortunately, many organizations and states are working tirelessly to address this contamination. However, congressional action on PFAS is necessary to fully clean-up our waterways, protect our drinking water, and restore our health and environment."**

# ABOUT PFAS

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## Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021

The Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 will aid organizational and state efforts to address this crisis by federally regulating the discharge of PFAS into our waterways.

This legislation directs EPA to review and develop effluent limitation guidelines, pretreatment standards, and water quality criteria for PFAS under the Clean Water Act, and to provide federal grants to publicly owned treatment works to implement standards. The Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 will reduce PFAS discharges and hold polluters accountable by adding PFAS

to the Clean Water Act's Toxic Pollutants List. These tools complement EPA's existing authority to prevent PFAS discharges through site-specific controls. This legislation exemplifies an important step towards ensuring all Americans have access to safe drinking water.

## Threats to Drinking Water

Many new PFAS-producing/using industrial and military facilities have been installed in or near underserved communities, where voices expressing concerns and urging calls to action have been ignored. As a result, the health impacts of PFAS are often disproportionately foisted on

low-income communities and those of color.

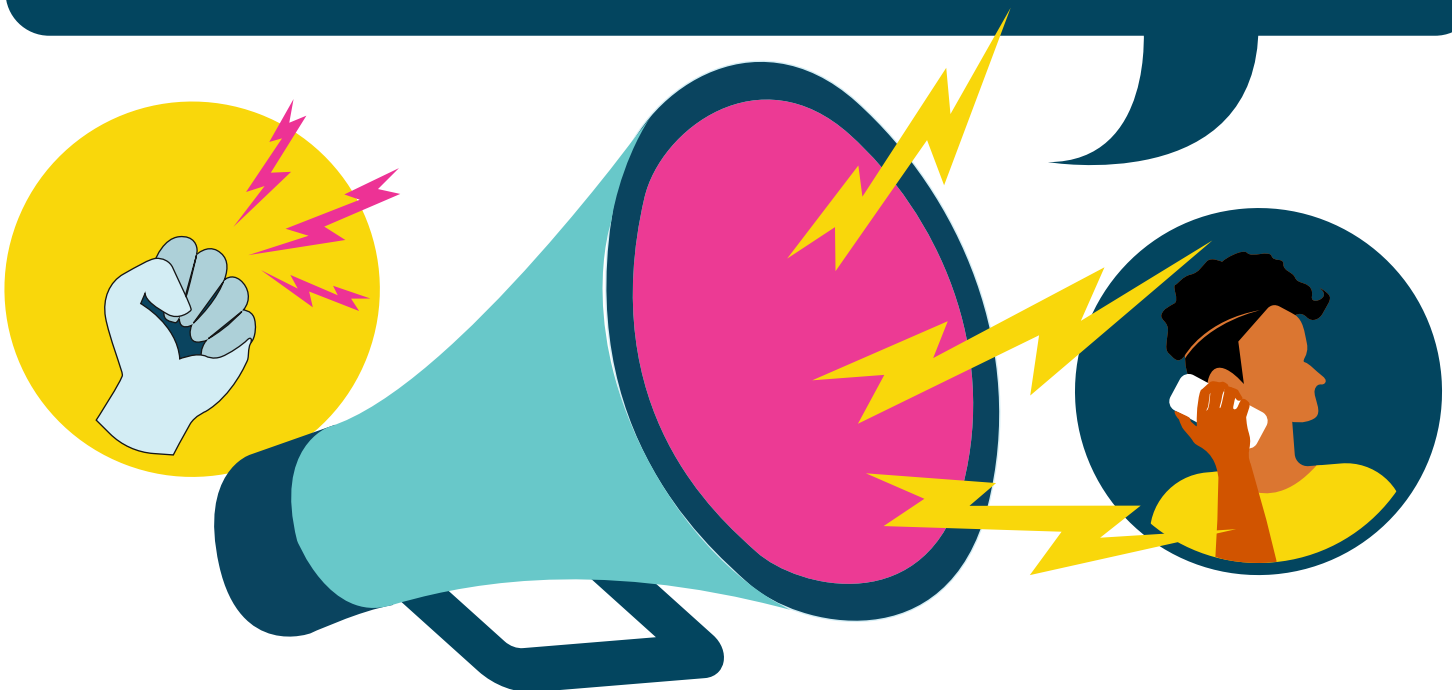
The Union of Concerned Scientists found that nearly 39,000 more low-income households and approximately 295,000 more people of color live within five miles of a site contaminated with PFAS. A new report by the Guardian shows that more than 25 million Americans drink from water systems that are contaminated. Water systems in Latinx, low-income, and rural communities are struggling to meet drinking water standards. The report further illustrates that drinking water contamination is twice the national rate in counties where Latinx communities make up 25 percent or more of the population.

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# TALKING POINTS

## Improving Water Quality for Impacted Communities

- 💧 Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that are linked to myriad cancers and human endocrine disruption.
  - 💧 Around the world, PFAS have been manufactured and used extensively in a variety of industries since the 1940s.
  - 💧 Here in the U.S and globally, PFAS contamination in drinking water is a growing public health crisis.
  - 💧 More than 200 million people in the U.S. are likely drinking water from polluted sources.
- 💧 PFAS can now be found in everyday products like waterproof jackets and nonstick pans. They've also been detected in the drinking water supplies of major cities like New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago.
- 💧 Drinking water is one of the most common routes of exposure.
  - 💧 PFAS have so far polluted the tap water of at least 16 million people in 33 states and Puerto Rico, as well as groundwater in at least 38 states
- 💧 PFAS contamination including PFOS/PFOA is widespread impacting more than 2,337 locations across 49 states.
- 💧 To date, there are no enforceable federal regulations for PFAS under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The EPA has not enforced existing protections under the Clean Water Act.



## TAKE ACTION

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### Stopping PFAS Pollution at the Source

- 💧 The EPA has made a public health advisory to provide a margin of protection from both PFOA and PFOS and says that these chemicals must not exceed 70 ppt in public water systems.
  - 💧 It's past time that EPA developed standards that protect communities from PFOA, PFOS, and all other PFAS.
- 💧 Major manufacturers in the PFAS industry include 3M, Chemours, and DuPont.
  - 💧 These billion-dollar companies have produced thousands of products where discharges have contaminated water supplies around the country.
  - 💧 While a few industries have phased out PFOS and PFOA, some continue to use other chemicals in the class.
- 💧 The Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 will tackle America's growing PFAS crisis.
  - 💧 The bill will protect drinking water by setting nationwide limits to PFAS under the Clean Water Act.

### Strengthening Public Water Systems

- 💧 The Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 will support public water systems' capacity to implement technology based effluent limits —ensuring water remains affordable and safe to drink for everyone.
- 💧 This bill will provide publicly owned treatment water systems with the resources needed to fully address the scale of PFAS pollution.
  - 💧 Strengthening the Clean Water Act's pretreatment program which will have significant impact on reducing PFAS into wastewater streams by targeting upstream industries that indirectly discharge to public water systems.
  - 💧 Priority industries include:
    - 💧 Organic chemicals, plastics, and synthetic fibers
    - 💧 Pulp, paper, and paperboard
    - 💧 Textile Mills
    - 💧 Electroplating
    - 💧 Metal finishing
    - 💧 Leather tanning and finishing
    - 💧 Paint formulating
    - 💧 Electrical and electronic components
    - 💧 Plastics molding and forming

# TAKE ACTION

## TAKE ACTION: Call Your Member of Congress

Let them know you want them to vote 'Yes' on H.R 3622 / S. 1907. If you have a connection with your congressional office, a short email to the right staffer can be most effective. **Below you will find a list of legislative targets and contact information to guide you in your outreach. There are also suggestions for action and engagement opportunities along with examples.** Don't know who to send your message to? Not sure what to say or write? Reach out to the toolkit authors below and our experts can help you craft your message. We can follow up to ensure a dedicated staff member has received your message.

## Legislative Targets List with Contact Information and Twitter/Facebook Handles

HOUSE						
NAME	Party	State	District Office #	DC Office #	Twitter	Facebook
Rep. David Rouzer	R	NC-07	(910) 395-0202	(202) 225-2731	@RepDavidRouzer	@RepRouzer
Rep. Richard Hudson	R	NC-08	(704) 786-1612	(202) 225-3715	@RepRichHudson	@RepRichHudson
Rep. Carolyn Bordeaux	D	GA-07	(770) 232-3005	(202) 225-4272	@RepBordeaux	@RepBordeaux
Rep. Lucy McBath	D	GA-06	(470) 773-6330	(202) 225-4501	@RepLucyMcBath	@replucymcbath
Rep. Federica Wilson	D	FL-24	(305) 690-5905	(202) 225-4506	@RepWilson	@RepWilson
Rep. Brian Mast	R	FL-18	(772) 336-2877	(202) 225-3026	@RepBrianMast	@RepBrianMast
Rep. Daniel Webster	R	FL-11	352-241-9220	202-225-1002	@RepWebster	@RepWebster
Rep. Nancy Mace	R	SC-01	(843) 521-2530	(202) 225-3176	@RepNancyMace	@RepNancyMace
Rep. John Garamendi	D	CA-03	(530) 753-5301	(202) 225-1880	@RepGaramendi	@repgaramendi
Rep. Grace F. Napolitano	D	CA-32	626-350-0150	(202) 225-5256	@gracenapolitano	@RepGraceNapolitano
Rep. Colin Z. Allred	D	TX-32	(972) 972-7949	(202) 225-2231	@RepColinAllred	@RepColinAllred
Rep. Beth Van Duyne	R	TX-24	(972) 966-5500	(202) 225-6605	@RepBethVanDuyne	@RepBethVanDuyne
Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson	D	TX-30	(214) 922-8885	(202) 225-8885	@RepEBJ	@CongresswomanEBJtx30
Rep. Brian Babin	R	TX-36	(832) 780-0966	(202) 225-1555	@RepBrianBabin	@RepBrianBabin
Rep. Greg Stanton	D	AZ-09	(602) 956-2463	(202) 225-9888	@RepGregStanton	@repgregstanton

# TAKE ACTION

## SENATE

NAME	Party	State	District Office #	DC Office #	Twitter	Facebook
Sen. Thom Tillis	R	NC	(704) 509-9087	(202) 224-6342	@SenThomTillis	@SenatorThomTillis
Sen. Richard Burr	R	NC	(888) 848-1833	(202) 224-3154	@SenatorBurr	@SenatorRichardBurr
Sen. Raphael Warnock	D	GA	(770) 661-0999	(202) 224-3643	@SenatorWarnock	@SenatorWarnock
Sen. Jon Ossoff	D	GA	(470) 786-7800	(202) 224-3521	@SenOssoff	@SenOssoff
Sen. Joni Ernst	R	IA	(515) 284-4574	(202) 224-3254	@SenJoniErnst	@senjoniernst
Sen. Mark Kelly	D	AZ	(602) 671-7901	(202) 224-2235	@SenMarkKelly	@SenMarkKelly
Sen. Tom Carper	D	DE	(302) 573-6291	(202) 224-2441	@senatorcarper	@tomcarper
Sen. Shelly Moore Capito	R	WV	(304) 347-5372	(202) 224-6472	@SenCapito	@senshelley
Sen. John Cornyn	R	TX	512-469-6034	202-224-2934	@JohnCornyn	@SenJohnCornyn
Sen. Lindsay Graham	R	SC	(803) 933-0112	(202) 224-5972	@LindseyGrahamSC	@LindseyGrahamSC
Sen. Rick Scott	R	FL	(850) 942-8415	(202) 224-5274	@SenRickScott	@RickScottSenOffice
Sen. Tammy Duckworth	D	IL	(312) 886-3506	(202) 224-2854	@SenDuckworth	@SenDuckworth



**UNABLE TO FIND YOUR TARGET LEGISLATOR ABOVE?  
SEARCH FOR YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS BELOW:**

[Find my U.S. Senators](#)

[Find my U.S. Representative](#)



# SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA

## Phone Call Script

My name is [NAME] and I live in [City, State]. I'm calling to ask you to co-sponsor HR 3622 / S. 1907 the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act 2021.

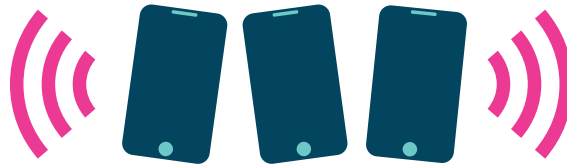
This bill will improve water quality and stop PFAS at the source to prevent contamination in our drinking water. For too long 'forever chemicals' have polluted our waterways and polluted our drinking supply without any effective enforcement under the Clean Water Act --- putting our health and environment at risk.

Please co-sponsor the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 and support immediate action to stop PFAS at the source. Your leadership to combat PFAS in drinking water is needed to ensure our waters are free from these harmful chemicals.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[CITY/STATE]



## Sample Social Media Messages

# hashtags

#ProtectCleanWater  
#CleanWaterForAll  
#AguaEsVida  
#EnvironmentalLiberation  
#LiberaciónAmbiental

## What are PFAS And How Do They Harm Latinos And Your Community

**TWITTER & FACEBOOK:** PFAS are a class of human-made chemicals that are prevalent in our land, air, & water nationwide. These emerging contaminants pose a risk to our waterways. The safety and well-being of rural and minority communities' access to clean water are at risk. [https://www.ewg.org/interactive-maps/pfas\\_contamination/map/](https://www.ewg.org/interactive-maps/pfas_contamination/map/)


**INSTAGRAM:** PFAS are a class of human-made chemicals that are prevalent in our land, air, & water nationwide. These emerging contaminants pose a risk to our waterways. The safety and well-being of rural and minority communities' access to clean water are at risk.




# SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA

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## How Can We Fight Them



**TWITTER:** Join the fight against PFAS, human-made chemicals that are poisoning our drinking water and hurting the Latinx community. Urge legislators to co-sponsor the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act, a bill that will improve water quality and prevent PFAS from contaminating our water.




**FACEBOOK:** The EPA has the authority to set limits to pollution and can require monitoring of U.S. public water supplies. However, EPA has not used its existing authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act or the Clean Water Act even though immediate action is needed. Our communities are hurting. We must get stronger regulatory information shared.



**INSTAGRAM:** The EPA has the authority to set limits to pollution and can require monitoring of U.S. public water supplies. However, EPA has not used its existing authority under the Safe Drinking Water Act or the Clean Water Act. We must get stronger regulatory information shared. Contact your Member of Congress to defend clean water access and prevent further PFAS exposure in drinking water in your community.

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## Join The Fight Against PFAS



**TWITTER:** The Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 will help remove PFAS, human-made chemicals that are poisoning our drinking water and hurting the Latinx community, while ensuring water remains affordable and safe to drink for everyone. Join the fight:

**FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM:** The Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 will support public water systems' capacity to implement technology based effluent limits to remove PFAS, human-made chemicals that are poisoning our drinking water and hurting the Latinx community, while ensuring water remains affordable and safe to drink for everyone.

# SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

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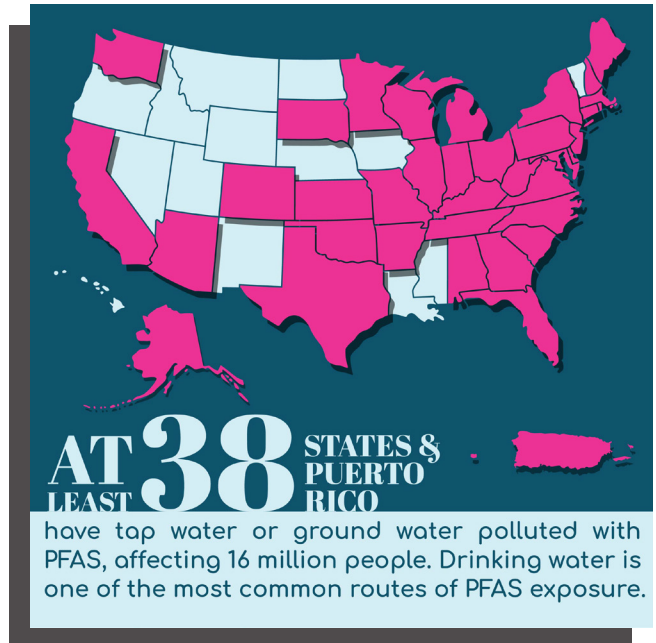


#Protect Clean Water

**CALL CONGRESS NOW**  
**202.224.3121**

to support the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021. Keep toxic PFAS chemicals out of our tap water.

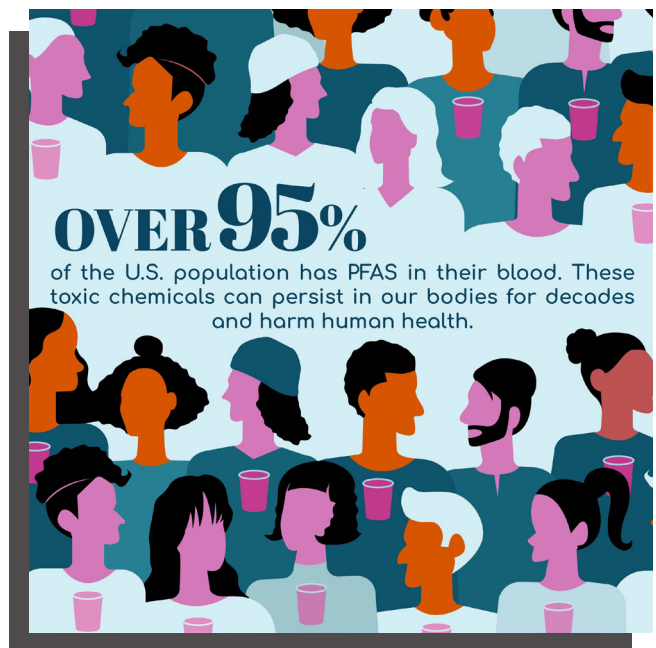
This graphic features a central illustration of the U.S. Capitol building. Surrounding it are several circular icons: a woman on a phone, a megaphone with lightning bolts, a hand holding a phone, and a person on a phone. The background is a mix of teal and dark blue.



**AT 38 STATES & PUERTO RICO**  
**LEAST**

have tap water or ground water polluted with PFAS, affecting 16 million people. Drinking water is one of the most common routes of PFAS exposure.

The graphic shows a map of the United States with 38 states and Puerto Rico highlighted in pink. The remaining states are in light blue. The background is a dark teal color.



**OVER 95%**

of the U.S. population has PFAS in their blood. These toxic chemicals can persist in our bodies for decades and harm human health.

This graphic features a stylized illustration of a diverse group of people's heads and shoulders, each holding a pink cup. The background is a mix of teal and dark blue.

[Download Images Here](#)

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# LETTERS OF THE EDITOR

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## Sample Letter to the Editor #1

To the editor:

Trust in our tap water is broken. A recent study shows there are at least 10 municipal water plants in North Carolina that have PFAS (per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) concentrations above 100 parts per trillion (ppt). While the EPA has set a health advisory at 70 ppt in 2016, many residents in Pittsboro, Fayetteville, and Wilmington continue to be exposed to these widespread and dangerous chemicals.

Regrettably, the Department of Environmental Quality is not using its existing authority to protect communities in the state but it should take immediate action to stop PFAS pollution at the source. As the nation's third highest state for PFAS exposure, we need clear standards under the Clean Water Act, our nation's primary law to prevent pollution in waterways and improve drinking water. In humans, PFAS can cause serious health complications including cancer.

I strongly urge [INSERT MEMBER OF CONGRESS] to co-sponsor the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021, a bill that will improve water quality and stop PFAS pollution at the source.



## Sample Letter to the Editor #2

To the editor:

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, are indestructible, man-made chemicals commonly found in food packaging and household items. Today, PFAS compounds are contaminating our waterways and creating public health hazards --- more than 25 million people drink from the worst U.S. water systems.

Alarmingly, water systems in Latinx, low-wealth, and rural communities are the most impacted. From your farm to your family home, PFAS are becoming more prevalent in our groundwater and drinking water supply. When consumed or exposed, these toxic chemicals can cause deadly diseases like cancer, impair learning abilities in kids, and disrupt liver and kidney functions. EPA and our state officials should take immediate action to stop PFAS pollution at the source.

I urge [INSERT MEMBER OF CONGRESS] to support the Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2021 and work to tackle America's drinking water crisis. To build an equitable clean water future, we must protect the health of all residents in [INSERT STATE] by strengthening the Clean Water Act and removing these toxic chemicals from our tap water.

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# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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1. Toxic "Forever Chemicals": Addressing PFAS Pollution in Water Fact Sheet

2. Frequently Asked Questions Sheet by EWG

3. Downloadable Social Media Images Folder

4. Recording of the PFAS Response Town Hall

5. PFAS in Food and Water

6. North Carolina PFAS Testing Network

7. New Study Finds PFAS in Bottled Water, as Lawmakers Call for Federal Limits

8. Sludge in the Garden by Sierra Club

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For more information, please contact:

**Christine Santillana**

Legislative Counsel

Earthjustice

[csantillana@earthjustice.org](mailto:csantillana@earthjustice.org)

**Jaime Sigaran**

Legislative Associate

Southern Environmental Law Center

[jsigaran@selcdc.org](mailto:jsigaran@selcdc.org)

**Mariana Del Valle**

**Prieto Cervantes**

Water Equity & Ocean Program Manager

GreenLatinos

[marianadelvalle@greenlatinos.org](mailto:marianadelvalle@greenlatinos.org)

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