



# PFAS MEDIA BRIEFING #2

## SOUTH CAROLINA'S INVESTMENT TO COLLECT DATA AHEAD OF THIS REGULATORY ACTION:

- Drinking water strategy
- Private drinking water well strategy

DHEC continues to be committed to engaging and working with all stakeholders on this issue. We will continue to gather data from water sources across the state to gain a better understanding of where these chemicals are found and to work to reduce the amount of them that are getting into both surface and groundwater that is used for drinking.

## ACRONYMS

**EPA** - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

**MCL** - Maximum Contaminant Level

**PFAS** - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

**PFOS** - Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid

**PFOA** - Perfluorooctanoic Acid

**RCRA** - Resource Conservation & Recovery Act

Visit our website for the most up-to-date information:

[scdhec.gov/PFAS](https://scdhec.gov/PFAS)

## 1 WHAT ARE ENFORCEABLE MAXIMUM CONTAMINANT LEVELS (MCLs)?

- MCLs are legally enforceable primary drinking water standards that public water systems must meet. Primary standards protect public health by limiting the levels of contaminants in drinking water.
- MCLs are proposed for six PFAS compounds.
- These proposed MCLs for PFAS represent chronic, or long-term health hazards and assume that a person drinks 2.5 liters of impacted water a day, 365 days per year, for 70 years.
- These proposed MCLs are not the final, enforceable standards because they may change based on public comments received by the EPA. See "What happens next?" below.
- An MCL is established for a mixture of 4 other PFAS (PFHxS, PFNA, PFBS, and HFPO-DA (GenX)) using a Hazard Index calculation that is currently primarily used by RCRA. This is the first time this process has been used to regulate drinking water.

## 2 WHY ARE THESE PFAS COMPOUNDS THE FIRST TO BE REGULATED?

- PFAS chemicals are man-made and were developed for the purpose of making a wide range of products that have desirable properties of being resistant to water, grease, heat and stains. These are the same properties that make them difficult to break down in our environment.
- There are over 9,000 PFAS chemicals. The six PFAS compounds mentioned are in the MCL-setting process because they are the most studied of the PFAS compounds.
- There is some evidence of adverse health effects at low concentrations of these chemicals in drinking water. Health effects are the basis for MCL determination.

### 3 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- March 14, 2023, the EPA issued their proposed MCLs for PFOA and PFOS as well as a Hazard Index calculation for the mixture of PFHxS, PFNA, PFBS and HFPA-DA (GenX). Now EPA will accept written comments on the proposed rule for 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register. At the end of the comment period, EPA must consider the comments and publish their responses in the Federal Register.
- Once the EPA finalizes the rulemaking process and final MCLs are issued, there is typically a three-year period before the new standards go into effect.
- Keep in mind drinking water is estimated by EPA to represent only 20% of our overall exposure to these chemicals. Many sources fall under the jurisdiction of other federal agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. **It will take a large, coordinated effort to further reduce the potential for exposure to PFAS.**
- Ways to reduce exposure can be found on the DHEC website: [scdhec.gov/pfas](https://scdhec.gov/pfas)
- EPA'S PFAS webpage: [epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas](https://epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas)