

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

April 9, 2021

The Honorable Michael Regan
Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan:

I write today to urge you to make it a top Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) priority to swiftly establish a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) under the Safe Drinking Water Act for Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), and expeditiously review the broader health data on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) as a class in order to assess possible regulatory actions against additional members of the broader group of chemicals. Additionally, I urge EPA to quickly phase out the non-essential uses of PFAS chemicals while this assessment is completed.

The scientific and public health communities agree that PFAS chemicals pose a great public health challenge and need to be regulated at the federal level. This is reflected in the March 15 letter from 67 experts urging EPA to regulate PFAS as a class. After the previous Administration's lack of urgency on the issue, I was pleased to hear that the EPA was reviving efforts to regulate PFOA and PFOS, but EPA must go further and quickly evaluate the health data on the broader class of PFAS chemicals. Addressing each of the over 9,000 chemicals individually is impractical, and due to their similar accumulation potential, toxicity, extreme persistence, and potential risk, EPA should review the health data of the class or closely related members within subclasses in order to assess possible regulatory actions for the broader group. As the Agency moves forward in its effort to set a MCL on PFOA and PFOS, as well as assessing the PFAS class, I encourage you to work collaboratively with states, tribes, water systems and local communities – particularly those across New York – impacted by these “forever chemicals”. While this work is undertaken, experts and advocates have urged the EPA to quickly phase out non-essential uses of PFAS chemicals, and I am adding my voice to this call for an expeditious move away from any non-essential uses of PFAS.

As you are aware, PFAS chemicals are a widespread class of toxic chemical contaminating drinking water across the nation. These chemicals have been linked to a number of adverse health effects, including certain types of cancers. Several communities across the state of New York are currently struggling with drinking water contamination, human exposure, and clean up challenges due to PFAS pollution. I have been working closely with these impacted communities to make the public aware of possible exposure to these toxic substances and to ensure proper cleanup however, without an enforceable standard these efforts are hindered. Our communities cannot continue to be left in the dark about the environmental and health risks they face from PFAS.

Although states, like New York, have set a MCL for some PFAS chemicals substances, federal drinking water standards and leadership are needed to provide tools to states, tribes, water systems, and local communities to secure safe drinking water. I strongly urge you to swiftly establish a drinking water standard for PFOA and PFOS, while expeditiously reviewing the broader health data on PFAS chemicals as a class, and phasing out the non-essential uses of PFAS chemicals.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact my staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charles Schumer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator