http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/pfas-cleanup-shawn-valosin-s450.png

Lawsuit seeks to hold polluters responsible for costs to clean up PFAS contamination

---

LA CROSSE — Gov. Tony Evers and Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul announced today they have filed a lawsuit against three Wisconsin manufacturers and 15 other defendants for "wrongful, deceptive, and tortious conduct" that led directly to PFAS contamination of Wisconsin's water, property, and natural resources. The complaint, authorized by Gov. Evers and filed in Dane County by the Attorney General Kaul and Wisconsin Department of Justice, alleges the defendants knew or should have known that the ordinary and intended use of their products would lead to the dangerous impacts on public health and the environment now being experienced across Wisconsin. Wisconsin taxpayers are currently facing enormous costs to address PFAS contamination, costs the lawsuit alleges should be borne by those responsible for their presence throughout the state.

"Every Wisconsinite deserves access to clean, safe water—free of lead, PFAS, and other

contaminants that have long been known to harm our kids, families, farmers, communities, and industries across our state," said Gov. Evers. "Every corner of Wisconsin has been affected by PFAS contamination, and communities from Marinette to Wausau to French Island are facing the harsh reality of PFAS in their wells, causing some folks and families to even have to rely on water coolers and plastic water bottles for clean drinking water. We're taking immediate action to address PFAS in Wisconsin by ensuring accountability and responsibility for polluters and making sure Wisconsinites don't have to foot the bill to clean up the messes that others have made."

Last year, Gov. Evers and Attorney General Kaul announced the they were preparing to take legal action against companies responsible for PFAS contamination following recommendations in the PFAS Action Plan released by the Wisconsin PFAS Action Council, which was created by Gov. Evers in 2019. The lawsuit filed today details PFAS-related Wisconsin business activity over decades from each of the Defendants that contributed to PFAS contamination in Wisconsin. It alleges causes of action including public and private nuisance, negligence, strict product liability for failure to warn and design defect, as well as trespass. The State seeks to "recover all costs, expenses, and damages associated with Defendants' tortious conduct, including—but not limited to—restoration and loss-of-use damages, natural-resource damages, and the costs of investigating, abating, containing, preventing, treating, removing, and remediating PFAS contamination in Wisconsin. The State also requests punitive damages to reflect Defendants' reprehensible conduct."

"PFAS contamination has impacted communities and water quality around the state," said AG Kaul. "This lawsuit seeks to ensure that the companies that are responsible — and not Wisconsin taxpayers — will pay to clean it up."

PFAS are per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, synthetic chemicals known to be toxic, mobile, and persistent in the environment, meaning they do not break down naturally. PFAS are a group of human-made chemicals used for decades in numerous products, including non-stick cookware, fast food wrappers, stain-resistant sprays, and certain types of firefighting foam. PFAS chemicals resist degradation in the environment and accumulate in the body. These contaminants are linked to serious adverse health effects in humans and animals. Epidemiologic studies have shown that potential adverse human health effects from exposure to some PFAS include increased serum cholesterol, immune dysregulation, pregnancy-induced hypertension, liver damage, and kidney and testicular cancers. Exposure to certain types of PFAS is also associated with low birthweight in humans, suppressed immune system response, dyslipidemia, impaired kidney function, and delayed onset of menstruation.

A copy of the filing can be found here . More information about the state of PFAS in Wisconsin, as well as the Wisconsin PFAS Action Council (WisPAC) created by Gov. Evers in 2019, can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website here

.