



## Office of The Mayor

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**PRESS RELEASE** - For Immediate Release

Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### **EPA's PFAS Action Plan high on rhetoric, low on action**

*Lack of leadership and tangible actions reveals an EPA that refuses to act and a Federal chemical regulation system that is broken beyond repair*

STATEMENT from Hoosick Falls Mayor Robert Allen:

This morning, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler released the EPA's PFAS Action Plan and highlighted five main points: evaluating the need for setting an MCL (maximum contaminant level) for PFOA and PFOS, setting interim groundwater recommendations for cleanup, expanding the monitoring of PFAS chemicals across the country, developing a deeper understanding of PFAS in humans and in the environment, and the creation of a Risk Communication Toolbox to communicate effectively to the public.

Every single one of these points falls painfully short of the actions needed to address a growing crisis that involves thousands of chemicals in the drinking water of millions of Americans.

PFOA and PFOS are two of the most widespread chemicals in the PFAS family. They are manmade, and take centuries to breakdown in the environment. They have contaminated many drinking water systems nationally, either through manufacturing processes like those in Hoosick Falls (PFOA), or through firefighting foam that has been tested and used at airports, firehouses, and Department of Defense sites across the nation (PFOS). Manufacturers such as DuPont and 3M have known of the dangers of these chemicals since at least the 1960's. EPA has known of the dangers of these chemicals since the 1990's. EPA set in motion a voluntary phase-out program in 2005. In its announcement today, EPA stated they have started the process to determine if PFOA and PFOS warrant an MCL.

This is as misguided a notion now as it was 9 months ago, when we heard the same sentiment expressed while meeting with former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt during May 2018's PFAS National Leadership Summit. The fact of the matter is that hundreds of studies from the C8 Science Panel to the ATSDR profile on Perfluoroalkyls establish the necessity for an MCL for PFOA and PFOS right now.

EPA's goal of setting an interim groundwater cleanup recommendation is similar to its health advisory – it won't give clear, specific, and required actions for all situations, but will only make suggestions. This offers a sharp contrast to one of the unifying messages from state and regional agencies who took part in the National Leadership Summit: the need for clear guidance at the Federal Level.

EPA's proposition of monitoring PFAS is completely impossible under the UCMR (Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule), which only tests for 30 different chemicals every two years. It would take 200 years to test for 3,000 of the 4,000+ PFAS chemicals. And it still wouldn't help areas like Hoosick Falls, because the UCMR program only tests systems that serve over 10,000 people.

The final two points only demonstrate how late to the game EPA is. There are years of science that explain pathway and exposure. There are hundreds of peer-reviewed studies that explain its toxicity and health effects. And most communities now know how to respond to this crisis, as the lack of federal leadership on the issue has led many states to develop the exact approaches that EPA is saying they will create.

New York is just one of the many states ahead of EPA. PFOA and PFOS were declared hazardous substances back in 2016. The state's Drinking Water Quality Council recommended a level of 10ppt, which after its public comment period should be formally adopted by the summer. Other states have their own MCLs, including New Jersey (14ppt for PFOA, 13ppt for PFOS) and Vermont (20ppt).

It is clear that EPA refuses to act, even in the growing face of a tidal wave of research and awareness that demands action. They are failing at their most basic core value: to protect human health and the environment.

In the face of EPA's years of inaction, it is clear to me that real leadership on this issue must come from somewhere else. **Today, we are calling on EPA and our Congressional Representatives to take whatever steps are necessary to set a Maximum Contaminant Level of 10ppt for PFOA and PFOS right now.**

This is just the first step of many that need to be taken to properly handle the PFAS crisis our nation is facing. The Village of Hoosick Falls stands ready to offer its experience on the issue to advance awareness and promote policy that leads to real action.

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