

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

March 6, 2024

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of communities across Georgia, we thank you for your commitment to establish drinking water standards for per- and polyfluoroalkyl, or PFAS, chemicals. These long-awaited standards are critical to protecting public health and ensuring that the burdens of PFAS pollution are not borne by Georgians. We strongly urge you to keep your administration's promise to address PFAS contamination by swiftly finalizing drinking water standards for PFAS.

EPA's proposed drinking water standards will set science-based limits for six PFAS: PFOA, PFOS, GenX, PFBS, PFHxS, and PFNA. Each of these chemicals have been linked to serious health harms including cancers, birth defects, immune system disruption, and reduced vaccine effectiveness.

For decades, communities in Georgia and neighboring Alabama have suffered from PFAS-contaminated drinking water resulting from textile and carpet manufacturing in north Georgia, known as the "carpet capital of the world." Across Georgia, there are at least 40 known drinking water systems contaminated PFAS, 15 of which report PFOA and PFOS above EPA's proposed Maximum Contamination Level of 4 parts per trillion ("ppt"), and many thousands of times higher than the health-based Maximum Contamination Level Goals (MCLGs) for these industrial chemicals.¹

Only a handful of states have established drinking water standards for PFAS, and Georgia is not one of them. Affected communities have been forced to spend tens of millions of dollars in an effort to address PFAS chemicals in their water, including the six chemicals in EPA's proposed drinking water standard.² Absent a nationwide Federal numerical standard, there is far less incentive for those who use and handle these chemicals to act responsibly to ensure that they do not contaminate the groundwater, rivers, and lakes that we rely on for drinking water. Likewise, lack of a nationwide drinking water standard will leave millions of those affected by PFAS contamination at risk of consuming potentially harmful amounts of these industrial chemicals that would otherwise be required by law to be effectively removed from their water. Nationwide standards will drive innovation in pollutant reduction technology, giving birth to new industries and breathing new life into existing ones as they rise to tackle PFAS contamination in our waterways and in our tapwater.

¹ ENV'T WORKING GRP., *PFAS Contamination in the U.S.* (Feb. 5, 2024), available at <https://perma.cc/VB6A-QNU9>.

² See, e.g., CITY OF ROME, *A Rome Water & Sewer Division EPA Update Brief (PFOA/PFOS)* (June 16, 2022), available at <https://perma.cc/Z69N-ZQLR>.

EPA's proposed drinking water rule, while long overdue, has given hope to communities who have been put at risk of the negative health effects of PFAS contamination, and has potential to protect more than 11 million Georgians from PFAS pollution in their drinking water. It is therefore crucial that the administration finalizes EPA's drinking water standard promptly, and as proposed.

We urge you to fulfill your commitment to protect public health and secure environmental justice by rapidly finalizing the drinking water standard for these six harmful "forever chemicals."

Sincerely,

Altamaha Riverkeeper

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

Concerned Citizens of Cook County

Coosa River Basin Initiative

Environment Georgia

Flint Riverkeeper Inc.

Georgia Interfaith Power and Light

Ogeechee Riverkeeper