

Office of the Mayor



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### MUNICIPAL WATER COALITION ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS PFAS SOURCES

**Madison, WI.** Today, the Municipal Water Coalition announced an initiative to address PFAS sources that could find their way into municipal wastewater treatment plants, often referred to as Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs). The Municipal Water Coalition is an alliance of groups representing municipal water and wastewater utilities comprised of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin Rural Water Association, Municipal Environmental Group – Wastewater Division, Municipal Environmental Group – Water Division, and the Wisconsin Section of the American Water Works Association.

We share the Department of Natural Resources' (Department) concern about PFAS compounds. However, wastewater treatment facilities are not "producers" or "users" of PFAS chemicals. Rather, POTWs are "receivers" of these chemicals used by manufacturers and consumers, and merely convey or manage the traces of PFAS that we encounter in our daily lives. Because PFAS are ubiquitous in households, consumer products, food, and the environment generally, they can make their way into the wastewater stream. The solution to these concerns is to reduce PFAS coming into POTWs because "end of pipe" treatment for POTWs is not feasible.

As a result, we are encouraging our wastewater utility members to identify facilities that may be potential users of materials containing PFOA and PFOS and develop a plan to work with these facilities to reduce sources of PFAS through product substitution or other Pollution Minimization Plan (PMP) alternatives.

- We are in the process of developing a screening criteria to identify any commercial or industrial dischargers in a POTW's sewer service area that could potentially be users of PFOS and PFOA containing materials. The screening criteria will be based on the tool used in Michigan, with feedback from the Department, our members, and other stakeholders.
- Once potential dischargers have been identified, we are advising our wastewater utility members to contact these individual dischargers and work with them to identify and reduce the use of products containing PFOS and PFOA. POTWs have successfully used this approach to reduce mercury and chlorides in wastewater influent.
- We will be working with our wastewater utility members and the Department to develop protocols for addressing known sources of PFOS and PFOA such as spent firefighting foam and sites where concentrated historic contamination has occurred.

Although the Department requested that POTWs undertake sampling of wastewater as a precursor to a PMP program, the approach announced today is designed to provide immediate results and is not dependent on first obtaining influent and effluent samples from POTWs. For this reason we have advised our wastewater utility members not to undertake sampling at this time as a precursor to taking action. We also have two other significant concerns with sampling wastewater influent and effluent at this time:

- Sampling protocols and lab certification have not been completed for PFAS compounds and we do not anticipate that any labs will be certified for some time.
- There are no surface water standards for PFAS compounds, and in fact, the scope statement for rule development for surface water standards was just recently announced.

Generating test results in the absence of certified labs and surface water standards does not provide POTWs, the Department, or the public with meaningful information. The most meaningful steps POTWs can take at this time are to work with the Department and dischargers to reduce sources of PFOA and PFOS. Our municipal members are committed to doing just that.