



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

April 27, 2020

THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Memorandum Regarding Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

FROM: Michael S. Regan

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael S. Regan", is placed to the right of the "FROM:" line.

TO: General Counsel
Assistant Administrators
Inspector General
Chief Financial Officer
Chief of Staff
Associate Administrators
Regional Administrators
Deputy Assistant Administrators
Deputy Regional Administrators

As Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, I saw firsthand how devastating per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances pollution can be for communities. Many PFAS persist in the environment and accumulate in the body, putting those exposed at risk of severe health effects. The scope of PFAS contamination in the United States and the potential public health threat makes our task to address these chemicals particularly challenging and urgent.

In North Carolina, I also wanted strong federal leadership. Now, as the EPA's Administrator, tackling this problem will be one of my top priorities. We will take meaningful action, following the science and following the law, to better understand and ultimately reduce the potential risks caused by these chemicals. I am committed to listening to the public and working collaboratively with states, tribes, local governments, industry, water systems and impacted communities to identify pragmatic approaches that will deliver critical protections across the country.

In the early days of this administration, we took some important steps. We pulled down a PFBS toxicity assessment that had been politically compromised and issued a new assessment backed by career scientists. We have taken swift action to begin to develop a national primary drinking water regulation, to collect new data critically needed to improve the EPA's understanding of 29 PFAS and to solicit data on the presence and treatment of PFAS in wastewater discharges. We have also voiced our strong support for President Biden's American Jobs Plan, which calls for investing billions of dollars to monitor and treat PFAS in drinking water.

But we still have more work to do. To build on this progress, I have asked Radhika Fox, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Water, and Deb Szaro, Acting Regional Administrator, Region 1, to convene and lead a council of senior EPA career officials from across the agency to strategize the best way to use the EPA's authorities, expertise and partnerships to mitigate and reduce PFAS pollution and protect public health and the environment. This newly established EPA Council on PFAS will collaborate on cross-cutting strategies; advance new science; develop coordinated policies, regulations and communications; and engage with affected states, tribes, communities and stakeholders. The work of the ECP is not a substitute for the ongoing efforts by our national programs and regions to meaningfully address PFAS pollution and its impacts on public health and communities. The ECP will strive to build on and significantly enhance our capabilities through comprehensive, coordinated and results-driven multi-media actions.

The agency's ongoing work on PFAS is based on the 2019 EPA PFAS Action Plan. Developed by EPA career staff, the plan identifies an agenda and actions that have yet to be realized. During the past few years, science has progressed rapidly, including through the hard work of our own scientists in the Office of Research and Development and throughout the agency. We must move forward with actions based on new science and a better understanding of the complex challenges so many of our communities are facing. To address these challenges and meet the needs of our partners and communities across the United States, I am directing the ECP to:

- Develop "PFAS 2021-2025 – Safeguarding America's Waters, Air and Land," a multi-year strategy to deliver critical public health protections to the American public. To develop the strategy, the ECP will review all ongoing actions, propose any necessary modifications and identify new strategies and priorities. The ECP shall make initial recommendations to me within 100 days of its establishment.
- Continue close interagency coordination on regional specific and cross-media issues to assist states, tribes and local communities faced with significant and complex PFAS challenges.
- Work with all national program offices and regions to maximize the impact of the EPA's funding and financing programs to support cleanup of PFAS pollution, particularly in underserved communities.
- Expand engagement opportunities with federal, state and tribal partners to ensure consistent communications, exchange information and identify collaborative solutions.

There is a lot of work ahead of us on this front. I have seen this problem firsthand, and I am committed to pursuing all options to address PFAS pollution with our mission to protect human health and the environment at the forefront. I appreciate your leadership as we roll up our sleeves on this issue and look forward to working with you on these next steps.