

PFAS in Wisconsin

January–
June 2025



ISTOCK/ANZHELA SHVAB



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Overview / Executive Summary

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to take a public health-centered approach to address PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) throughout Wisconsin.

During the first half of 2025, the DNR continued to support those who are impacted by PFAS while working to understand how changes in the federal government would impact available resources. Ongoing work by the DNR included sampling for PFAS in drinking water; providing temporary, emergency water to private well owners with PFAS levels in their wells above health recommendations; and working with public water systems towards implementation of and compliance with new federal standards.

The DNR continues to monitor state legislative actions and provided comments on Senate Bills 127 and 128. The DNR also continues to collaborate with other states on learning opportunities to expand the understanding of PFAS and its impacts. Collaboration among levels of government is a dynamic process. Subscribe to the [PFAS Contamination in Wisconsin](#) GovDelivery list to receive updates about the DNR's work to address PFAS in Wisconsin.

Federal Actions

U.S. EPA Released Biosolids Draft Risk Assessment

In January, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a draft risk assessment that outlines the potential human health risks associated with PFAS in biosolids. This [draft document](#) indicates that there may be risk to human health from exposure to PFOA or PFOS when biosolids are disposed through land application, landfilling or incineration.

One Million Dollar Grant To Improve Understanding Of Water Quality, Fish Consumption And Related Health Issues In Central Wisconsin Terminated by U.S. EPA

In October 2024, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [received a \\$1 million grant](#) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to improve community understanding of water quality, fish consumption and related health issues in disproportionately impacted communities of central Wisconsin. The three-year project was focused on communities in Marathon, Clark, Taylor, Lincoln, Langlade, Shawano, Portage and Wood counties. In March 2025, six-months into the project, the U.S. EPA notified the DNR that the grant had been terminated. The grant had funded six non-profit employees, including five community health workers. It also funded \$65,000 worth of private well testing to detect harmful bacteria, nitrates and other contaminants. This amount of funding would have tested approximately 500 wells in rural communities.

State Actions

ISTOCK/MARK BUCKINGHAM



NR 140 Rulemaking To Establish Standards For PFAS In Groundwater

After the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized federal drinking water standards for six types of PFAS (i.e., PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS, and HFPO-DA which is also known as GenX) in drinking water in April 2024, the DNR formally requested that the Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services (DHS) provide updated health-based recommendations for these six compounds. In January, DHS provided the DNR with updated health-based recommendations

for these compounds. Then the DNR [initiated rulemaking](#) to establish groundwater standards using DHS' recommendations. In March, the DNR held a public hearing on the scope statement and in April the Natural Resources Board approved the scope statement. The DNR is currently preparing the economic impact analysis and draft rule language.

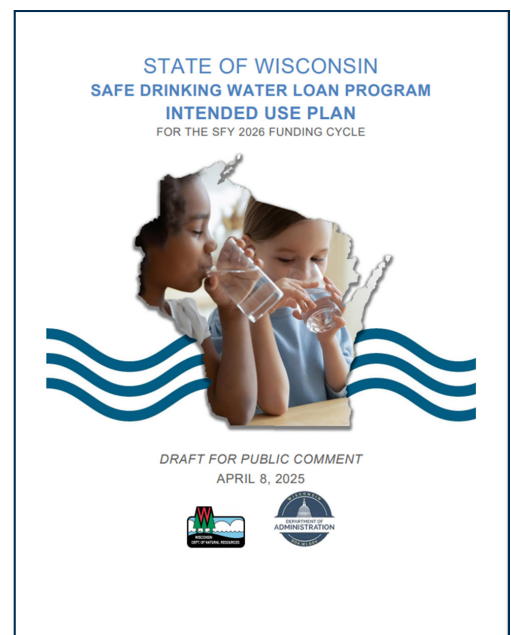
NR 809 Rulemaking To Update State Standards For PFAS In Drinking Water

The DNR is continuing through the [rulemaking process](#) to align Wisconsin's current standards for PFAS in drinking water with the EPA's drinking water standards. During the first half of 2025, the DNR prepared an economic impact analysis and released it for public comment.

Public Input Opportunities

During the first half of 2025, the Bureau of Community Financial Assistance (CFA) released for public comment the annual Intended Use Plans (IUP) for the [Safe Drinking Water Loan Program](#) (SDWLP) and [Clean Water Fund Program](#) (CWFP). After releasing the SDWLP IUP in April, CFA hosted a [webinar](#) to answer questions about the process. CFA also held a similar [webinar](#) in June after releasing the CWFP IUP for public comment.

Funding from these programs is available to municipalities as subsidized loans for public drinking water system and infrastructure projects (i.e., SDWLP) or for publicly owned wastewater treatment and collection system infrastructure projects (i.e., CWFP). Each year, the DNR prepares these IUPs to identify how funding from these revolving funds may be used as well as how the intended funding aligns with federal requirements for these funds. More information about these loans, including responses to the public comments and project priority lists, is available on the [DNR's website](#).



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Well Compensation Grant Program

In January, Gov. Evers [announced](#) that an additional \$5 million of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were available to private well owners through the [Well Compensation Grant Program](#). Eligible private well owners can use grant funding from this program to address contamination including PFAS, drill new wells or install treatment equipment. Demand for financial assistance through this program has been high since Gov. Evers temporarily expanded eligibility criteria in 2022 using federal funding. In the first half of 2025, the DNR awarded \$2.1 million in grants to private well owners to address contamination.

Federal Funding for Emerging Contaminants

The DNR awarded \$1,323,056.64 from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's [Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities \(EC-SDC\) grant program](#) during this time period. This grant program provides funds for other-than-municipal community and nonprofit non-transient, non-community water systems to address PFAS or manganese contamination. The types of projects funded by these grants include drilling new wells, connecting to existing public water systems or installing treatment to receive a safer water supply.

Other-than-municipal community systems are residential public water systems such as apartment complexes, subdivisions and mobile home parks. Non-transient, non-community systems are non-residential public water systems such as schools, day care centers and businesses. These small public water systems have historically been ineligible to receive financial assistance through the DNR.

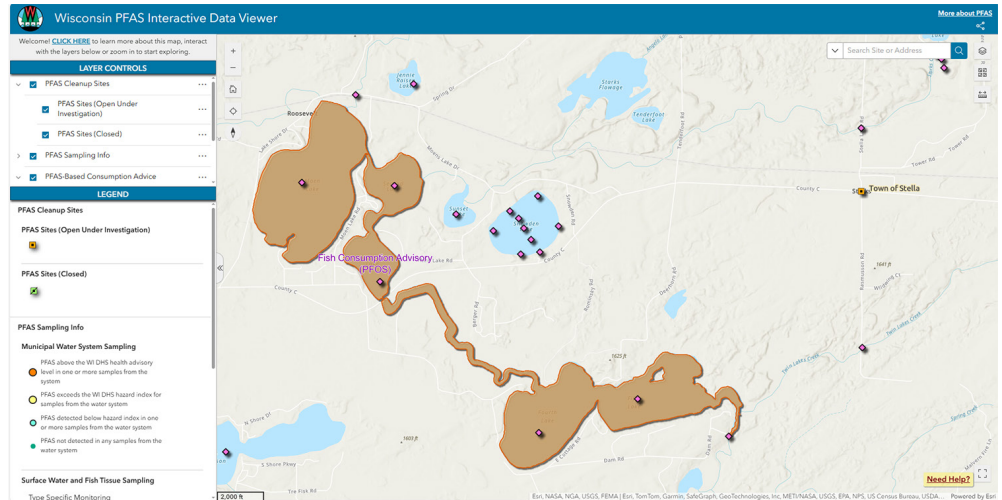
The DNR is expecting to award a total of over \$2.6 million through the EC-SDC grant program once all applications are processed. The second grant cycle for this program closed on June 30, 2025.

The DNR awarded \$925,075 from the Safe Drinking Water Loan Program's Emerging Contaminants funding to the Town of Campbell to construct Phase 1 of a new public drinking water system. Of the total awarded, half of it was from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the form of principal forgiveness, which does not need to be repaid by the municipality. The DNR is also working with two other municipalities to provide financial assistance to address PFAS contamination in their public drinking water systems. Additionally, the DNR received SFY 2026 applications from eight municipalities requesting nearly \$44 million in funding for projects to address PFAS contamination. The SDWLP Emerging Contaminant funding is expected to be available to municipalities through at least SFY 2027.

Statewide Surface Water Sampling

The Bureau of Water Quality has received all lab results from 2024 PFAS surface water sampling and posted them to the DNR's [PFAS Interactive Data Viewer](#). Staff also created maps of sampling results in select areas of the state where extensive sampling has occurred. These maps are available in the PFAS Interactive Data Viewer and allow multiple sampling results from a specific area to be viewed at once.

Sites sampled in 2024 include tributaries of the Wisconsin River in the Central Sands and watersheds around the municipalities of Merrill and Antigo, as well as the Town of Drammen in Eau Claire County. Other areas included four sites at the UW-Madison Trout Lake Research Station, the watersheds of Wilson Park Creek and Oak Creek around Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport and the Yahara River, Lake Monona and Starkweather Creek in the Madison area.



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Sampling Bald Eagles For PFAS

As part of a collaborative project with UW Sea Grant, the DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management collected approximately 50 blood samples from bald eagle nestlings along the Wisconsin River. Samples were collected from various locations on the river spanning from Prairie du Chien to above Rhinelander. All samples will be analyzed for PFAS. In addition, various immunological biomarkers will be performed on the samples to better understand potential impacts of PFAS exposure to nestling bald eagles.

Site Specific Updates

Support to Impacted Communities

The DNR provides significant financial support to communities impacted by PFAS. Between January and June, the DNR provided temporary emergency water to 1,726 residences in PFAS-impacted communities. For the months of January through April, the cost for temporary emergency water was \$207,349.60. Invoices for May and June were not available as of publication of this report and are expected to be approximately \$89,000. Of the residences receiving temporary, emergency water, 1,596 are in the Town of Campbell. Additionally, the DNR provided funding to assist public water systems drill 26 new wells to access different sources of water.

In addition to financial support, the DNR provides technical assistance to staff at public water systems, community officials in PFAS-impacted communities, businesses and private well drillers. The DNR's expertise helps these entities to best assist their constituents and customers as they work to reduce human exposure to PFAS through drinking water. For example, the DNR can help assess a situation's unique circumstances, such as the location's hydrology and water chemistry, and develop steps to minimize exposure that consider those circumstances.

PFAS Contamination in Marinette and Peshtigo

The DNR continued to review JCI/Tyco's actions to investigate and mitigate risks from PFAS contamination in the Marinette and Peshtigo area.

JCI/Tyco's current remedial actions include a groundwater extraction and treatment system (GETS) and surface water treatment. The DNR reviewed and responded to JCI/Tyco's [GETS Progress Report #4](#), [Ditch A Treatment Update](#) and [Ditch B Treatment Update](#). JCI/Tyco completed work to expand the GETS, to further limit the migration of PFAS contamination in the groundwater and surface water. The effectiveness of this expansion will be evaluated in future Progress Reports. JCI/Tyco also continues to install deep private drinking water wells to replace shallow wells in an area of the groundwater contaminant plume designated the Potable Wells Sampling Area (PSWA). As of June, JCI/Tyco had completed 121 deep wells and had agreements in place to install 17 additional wells in the PWSA.

PFAS Contamination in the Town of Campbell

The Town of Campbell is continuing to work towards the development of a new public water system as a long-term solution to PFAS contamination in private wells. Work to prepare the site of the first well is underway, but the colder weather this spring delayed drilling activities. An island-wide advisory for private wells continues to allow the DNR to provide temporary bottled water to 1,596 homes. More information about ongoing efforts to address PFAS in the Town of Campbell is available on the [Town of Campbell website](#).

PFAS Contamination in Dane County

The Dane County Regional Airport (DCRA) and Wisconsin Air National Guard (Air National Guard) continues to work to understand and address PFAS at the airport. The Air National Guard has completed their first phase of site investigation field work and is working on a community involvement plan and site investigation submittals. DCRA has begun a pilot remedial action for groundwater at Darwin Road. More information about PFAS and the airport is available on [DCRA's website](#).

Town of Stella Updates

Private Well Sampling

As of June 20, 2025, the DNR has received PFAS results for 241 private wells in the vicinity of the Town of Stella. Of the 241 wells sampled for PFAS:

- 88 private wells have reported concentrations of PFAS greater than DHS' recommended health guidelines.
- 39 private wells have reported detections for PFAS that are less than DHS' recommended health guidelines.
- 114 private wells have no reported detections for PFAS.

Surface Water Sampling

The Bureau of Water Quality sampled 23 new surface water sites near Town of Stella during 2024. These sampling results have been combined with the results from 2023's sampling efforts to provide an expanded understanding of PFAS in surface waters around the Town of Stella. All of these results, including a PDF summary file, have been posted on the DNR's [PFAS Interactive Data Viewer](#).

Fish Sampling

In 2024, Fisheries Management staff collected fish from Snowden Lake for PFAS analysis at the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene. These sampling results are currently being reviewed by DNR staff in consultation with staff from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Deer Sampling

During the 2024 deer hunting seasons, hunters donated approximately 10 tissue samples from deer harvested within three miles of the Town of Stella to the DNR. These samples were submitted to the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene for PFAS analysis and results are being reviewed by DNR staff in consultation with staff from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Federal Coordination and Superfund

The DNR continues to assist the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with their [Superfund](#) Site Assessment-related activities near Town of Stella.

The DNR recently completed a preliminary assessment and site inspection (SI) sampling on behalf of the EPA. These actions were conducted to support the EPA's evaluation of whether the PFAS contamination in the Town of Stella qualifies this area to be listed as a Superfund site on the National Priorities List (NPL). The DNR takes these steps when a site may meet the criteria to be included on the NPL and the DNR may not have sufficient resources available to ensure that the contamination is adequately investigated and remediated. If the site becomes a Superfund site, EPA is likely to search for and may pursue potentially responsible parties as part of the Superfund process. The DNR also continues to share information and coordinate with EPA regarding PFAS contamination in the Town of Stella.

The SI is one early step in the overall Superfund site listing process. Next steps include development of a Hazard Ranking System (HRS) score to determine if the site is eligible, based on the overall site risk, for listing on the National Priorities List (NPL). The final decision on whether the site qualifies for the NPL and will be added to the federal Superfund Remedial program will be made by the DNR and EPA. The entire process of listing a site takes several years.