



## The It Couple: Environmental Justice and PFAS

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EPA recently held its first of two public meetings to garner input on environmental justice considerations related to the development of the proposed per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) national primary drinking water regulation (NPDWR) under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The purpose of the public meetings is for EPA to share information and provide an opportunity for communities to offer input on the development of the proposed PFAS NPDWR and the regulation's fair treatment of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income.

During the March 2, 2022 meeting, which was held virtually, representatives of environmental groups and community activists urged EPA to develop multiple regulations under various environmental statutes to regulate PFAS. Commenters argued the proposed PFAS drinking water standards will have no effect on the underlying source of PFAS, nor will it address issues related to disposal of water treatment wastes.

Commenters also urged EPA to move more quickly in developing Clean Water Act effluent limitation guidelines (ELGs) for PFAS. Currently, EPA has sufficient data to develop and propose ELGs for the organic chemicals, plastics and synthetic fibers industry, and the metal finishing and electroplating industry, which it intends to issue in mid-2023 and mid-2024, respectively.

Many commenters noted dischargers of PFAS are concentrated in environmental justice communities. EPA stated it is currently studying the possibility of disproportionate impacts from PFAS air pollution on environmental justice communities. One regulatory option EPA is considering is to list certain PFAS compounds as hazardous air pollutants.

Finally, several commenters urged EPA to regulate PFAS as a class, rather than as individual compounds or small groups. Individuals urged EPA to consider class-based regulation to avoid spending an inordinate amount of time developing regulations for PFAS compounds in smaller groups. EPA stated it is currently evaluating additional PFAS compounds and will consider regulating the chemicals in larger groups if it can be justified scientifically.

A second public meeting will be held on April 5, 2022. Individuals planning to participate must register **here** no later than April 4, 2022. Individuals may sign-up to make brief oral remarks as a part of their registration. EPA anticipates issuing a final regulation in fall 2023 after considering all public comments on the proposal.

*Notice of Public Meeting: Environmental Justice Considerations for the Development of the Proposed Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR)*  
**87 Fed. Reg. 27 (February 9, 2022)**

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