

# Federal PFAS Priorities



The Orange County Water District (OCWD) manages the Orange County Groundwater Basin that provides 77% of the water supply to 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. PFAS have been detected in the Basin, entering primarily via the Santa Ana River whose flows infiltrate into and recharge the Basin. Although chemical manufacturers are the original source of PFAS chemicals, water agencies and ratepayers are burdened with the responsibility to monitor and treat the chemical(s) to remove it from their local water supplies.

OCWD closely monitors PFAS legislation and encourages water agencies and stakeholders to take action by contacting your legislators to advocate for the following priorities:

**Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of thousands of chemicals that are used to make carpets, clothing, fabrics for furniture, food packaging, cookware, and other materials to make them non-stick and/or resistant to water, oil, and stains. They are also used in a number of industrial processes and firefighting activities.**

## **1 All PFAS-related legislation and rulemaking must exempt water and wastewater agencies from any liability for PFAS clean-up costs.**

The “polluter pays” principle must be upheld and OCWD is strongly advocating to add an exemption for water and wastewater agencies to any future PFAS legislation or rulemaking. A water utility that complies with applicable and appropriate federal management and treatment standards must not be responsible for current and future costs associated with a PFAS cleanup.

## **2 When setting drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) should utilize current methodology.**

According to the USEPA’s recently released PFAS Roadmap, Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) will be set for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in two years. OCWD urges the USEPA to rely upon the Safe Drinking Water Act’s current methodology, which includes a cost-benefit analysis as a component in the development of drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS. This current methodology ensures that public health benefits of new drinking water standards are reasonably balanced with the compliance costs.