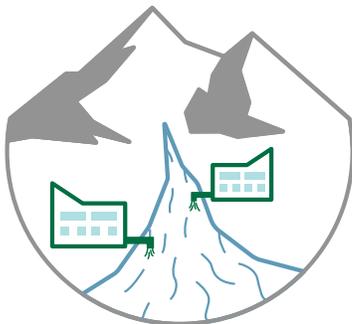




PFAS in Orange County

What are they, how do they impact us and what's being done?



PFAS have been detected in the Orange County Groundwater Basin, entering primarily via the Santa Ana River (SAR) whose flows infiltrate into the basin. PFAS inputs to the SAR include treated wastewater discharges and stormwater runoff from upstream communities in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Chemical manufacturers are the original source of PFAS chemicals. Despite playing no role in releasing PFAS into the environment, cities and water agencies must find ways to remove it from their local water supplies.

Impacts to Orange County

Orange County Water District (OCWD) and the water retailers it serves provide safe and dependable drinking water that continually meets all state and federal drinking water standards. The state of California has established advisory levels for three PFAS compounds. **In order to meet California's advisory Response Levels for PFAS in drinking water, several dozen wells are impacted and future wells may be taken out of service.** Agencies will have to temporarily purchase more costly imported surface water to replace PFAS contaminated supplies, which could increase ratepayers' monthly water bills.

OCWD Actions to Address PFAS

OCWD is proactively and swiftly addressing PFAS in the Orange County Groundwater Basin.

In December 2019, OCWD launched the nation's largest pilot project to test 14 different types of treatment media, including granular activated carbon, ion exchange, and novel alternative adsorbents, with the goal of identifying reliable and cost-effective solutions to remove PFAS from water. The project will continue to test additional adsorbents just emerging into the marketplace.

OCWD's board of directors implemented a PFAS treatment policy that enables constructing treatment facilities to restore the impacted drinking water supply. OCWD is funding 100% of design and construction costs, with operation and maintenance costs shared 50/50 with the retail water agency. By 2024, 36 treatment facilities will be online for 11 currently impacted water agencies and 59 currently impacted wells will be restored.

OCWD and 10 of Orange County's public water agencies filed a lawsuit against 3M Company, E.I. DuPont de Nemours, Inc., DuPont de Nemours and Company, Chemours Company, and Corteva, Inc. for the manufacture and sale of PFAS that have contaminated groundwater, drinking water, and real property in Orange County. Through their lawsuit, OCWD and the public water agencies seek to protect ratepayers and ensure that the associated costs, including but not limited to treatment and replacement water, are borne by the companies that developed and manufactured PFAS.

What Are They?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of thousands of manmade 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.

Estimated Costs of PFAS to Orange County over 30 Years

\$1 BILLION

**As of July 2020 these costs are based on preliminary data and will likely increase.*

Federal PFAS Advisories

In June 2022, U.S. EPA (EPA) issued new final Health Advisories (HAs) for GenX and PFBS, and issued updated interim HAs for PFOA, and PFOS that replace those issued by EPA in 2016. HAs are not federal regulatory limits and are non-enforceable.

Summary of EPA HA values:

Chemical	Lifetime Health Advisory Level/Value (parts per trillion/ppt)
PFOA	0.004 (interim)
PFOS	0.02 (interim)
GenX Chemicals	10 (final)
PFBS	2,000 (final)

** Note: 1 ppt is roughly equivalent to one drop of water in 20 Olympic-sized pools.*

State PFAS Advisories

OCWD and its PFAS-impacted retailers comply with state advisory levels for PFOA, PFOS, and PFBS established by the State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Drinking Water (DDW).

Current state advisory levels are:

Chemical	Notification Levels (NL)	Response Level (RL)
PFOA	5.1 ppt	10 ppt
PFOS	6.5 ppt	40 ppt
PFBS	500 ppt	5,000 ppt

** Note: GenX has not been detected in the Basin; PFBS has been detected, but at levels far below all current state advisories and the new federal HA.*

The NL is the level at which water agencies are required to notify local elected officials and governing bodies of the presence of contaminants in local water supplies. NLs are precautionary health-based advisory levels established by DDW while further research and analysis are conducted by the state to determine the necessity of setting an enforceable drinking water maximum contaminant level (MCL).

The RL is the level at which the state recommends the water not be served to the public without treatment or blending to reduce contaminants.

The state has issued draft Public Health Goals (PHGs) for PFOA and PFOS that should be finalized by the end of 2022, at which time DDW will start its development of a statewide enforceable regulation, which should take approximately two years.

Additional Info

www.ocwd.com

www.epa.gov/pfas

www.fda.gov/food/chemicals/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas

www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/PFOA_PFOS