

WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Date: November 13, 2024

To: Washington State Board of Health Members

From: Kate Dean, Board Member

Subject: Panel – State Agency Response to Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

Background and Summary:

On June 12, 2024, in response to the Environmental Protection Agency's adoption of a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), the State Board of Health (Board) initiated three rulemakings to revise the Board's PFAS requirements for drinking water. With this action and prior rulemakings related to PFAS, the Board joins many state agencies working in different capacities to research and mitigate these contaminants.

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals used in many products for their water, grease, and stain-resistant properties. They've been used in things like non-stick cookware, waterproof clothing, food packaging, and firefighting foam. PFAS do not break down easily in the environment or the human body, which means they can accumulate over time. Studies have linked PFAS exposure to health issues, including certain cancers, immune system effects, and developmental problems in children.

The Board's rulemaking authority pertains to Group A Public Water Systems, which is one piece of the regulatory framework aimed at reducing exposure to PFAS chemicals. Today, representatives from the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Ecology (ECY) will present their respective office's efforts towards PFAS mitigation:

- Barbara Morrissey (DOH) will discuss the science and cycle of PFAS and how the chemicals flow from water to secondary sources, including fish and marine life.
- Bonnie Brooks (ECY) will present Ecology's efforts towards toxic clean-up of contaminated sites.
- Claire Nitsche (DOH) will share efforts towards environmental health literacy with the public and health education of PFAS.
- Holly Davies (DOH) and Marissa Smith (ECY) will highlight Washington's efforts to remove PFAS from consumer products and joint efforts between the two agencies.

PFAS are a rapidly evolving issue, and many state and local governments are working to protect communities from these chemicals. Staff will continue to bring educational opportunities to familiarize the Board with the landscape of this work.

(continued on the next page)

This is not an action item.

Staff

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