Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
90 Sargent Drive
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

AGENDA

Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

1. Safety Moment

2. Review and discuss proposed capital and operating budgets for Fiscal Year 2024 (June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024) - *Upon 2/3 vote, convene in executive session pursuant to C.G.S. Section 1-200(6)(E) to discuss matters covered by Section 1-210 subsection b #'s 5 B, pertaining to commercial and financial information:* R. Kowalski

3. Approval of Minutes – March 8, 2023 regular meeting

4. Updates on land and RWA properties, including invasive species update

5. Other land items

6. Next meeting regular meeting: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

7. Adjourn

SAFETY MOMENT

Tap Into Safety

Regional Water Authority

PREVENT BACK INJURIES

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), back injuries account for one of every five injuries and illnesses in the workplace. Many of these injuries are associated with manual materials handling tasks. BLS further states that re-aggravation of a previous injury almost always results from a new incident which involves the employee (i.e. slip, twist, trip, extended reach). Lifting-related injuries include sprains, strains, neural related, neuromuscular related injuries and/or bone related injuries. These injuries can affect any part of the body, but the majority occurs to the lower back. The bottom line is that **YOU** bear the responsibility for preventing back

Recognize the 5 Leading Back Injury Risk Factors!

Poor posture
Poor physical condition
Improper body mechanics
Incorrect lifting
Jobs that require high energy

Be Willing to Change Your Posture Habits!

When you assume a <u>neutral</u> posture, your body will find its natural balance. Adjust your worksite to fit you <u>before</u> you begin the task.

Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

Safety is a core company value at the Regional Water Authority .
It is our goal to reduce workplace injuries to zero.

Regional Water Authority

UNAPPROVED

Representative Policy Board
Land Use Committee
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District

Minutes of March 8, 2023 Meeting

The regular meeting of the Land Use Committee of the Representative Policy Board ("RPB") of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District ("RWA") took place on Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut. Chair Betkoski presided.

Committee Members: P. Betkoski, P. DeSantis, B. Eitzer, R. Harvey, M. Levine, G. Malloy, J. Oslander, and J. Mowat Young

Authority: C. LaMarr

Management: J. Hill, S. Lakshminarayanan, and J. Triana

Resident Beekeeper: Vincent Kay

Staff: J. Slubowski

Chair Betkoski called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

On motion made by Mr. Malloy, and seconded by Mr. Harvey, the Committee approved the minutes of its February 8, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Kay provided an update on beekeeping activities on RWA properties. He stated that the honeybees produce 20,000 pounds of honey annually. Mr. Kay discussed food availability for bees, environmental parity and the need to replace plants that are removed. Some of the food consumed by honeybees include white clover, red clover, cranberries, blueberries, pears, and apples.

He also discussed the effects of pesticides, contamination, and lawn treatments on honeybee mortality. Mr. Kay stated that the use of pesticides kills the bees, destroys the environment, and can seep into the water supply, especially in areas with wells. Mowing during the day is discouraged and can kill bees, if possible, mowing should take place later in the day when bees are not present.

Mr. Kay discussed best beekeeping practices such as education, handling of parasitic mites, correct ways to dispose of contaminated hives, laws & regulations, cleaning & sterilization, and overall good housekeeping habits.

Committee members discussed bee vaccines, production, environmental threats, beeswax, travel radius, environmental stress, and costs to maintain the hives.

At 6:10 p.m., Mr. Kay and Ms. Young withdrew from the meeting.

Update on *The Land We Need for the Water We Use Program* – Mr. Triana, the RWA's Real Estate Manager, reported:

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	**Previous Year**	**Historical Average**	**Drought Status**
February 28, 2023	92%	97%	82%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
February 2023	0.88	4.40	3.33
Fiscal YTD (6/1/22 – 2/28/23)	29.63	38.21	34.01

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Prospect, off Roaring Brook Rd. – Reviewed title report. Inspected property. Owner contacted those he previously gave permission to hunt the property to remove anything they still have on the property. Reviewed the title objection notice that Murtha was sending to the owner.
- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 7+/- acres.
- North Haven – Corresponded with property owner of 14+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Pomps La. properties (NB 4) – Met with surveyor and Murtha staff to discuss progress. Murtha will contact town staff to see if they are ready to make whatever administrative cuts are possible.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – Have not heard back from Asst. Town Attorney about the condemnation.
- Guilford, 1155 Great Hill Rd. – Inspected property. No watershed issues found. The unapproved shed was removed.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – 70% complete.
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. May be pushed to summer due to ground conditions.
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – **40% complete.**
    - Corresponded with Seymour town staff about water ponding on Haddad Rd. near the log landing. Made more changes on the log landing to divert water to the north.
    - Received notification from USDA that our grant application was ranked 20th out of 30.
    - Met with Eversource staff and contractors who plan to control vegetation within their ROW at Lake Saltonstall from the UI lines to the substation.
    - Met DEEP staff to discuss the summer bat monitoring season.
    - Looked into the request to extend PA 490 forest-land classification for two parcels in Guilford, and researched information on the Tax Assessor's webpage regarding the open space application program.

Recreation

- Winter tree walk at Lake Saltonstall had 15 participants.
- Trails were cleared at Sugarloaf, Hammonasset, and Chamberlain.
- Continued process for hiring new recreation staff for the 2024 fishing season.
- Spring newsletter was published and distributed.
- Responded to abutter's question about horse trails off of Sperry Rd., Woodbridge.
- Rejected inquiry about installing a new trail behind Glendower Rd., Hamden.
- Met to discuss recreation proposals including other trails in Hamden.
- Repaired plank bridge at Pine Hill.
- Issued a warning to a permit holder seen parking and walking in unauthorized places.

	February		January	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
Permit Holders	4,822	5,601	4,847	5,605

Special Activity Permits

- CT Forest & Park Assoc. (CFPA) (Elizabeth Merow) conduct tour of property, Master Woodland Manager Program, forestry ecology, Rt. 79 Madison, (3/4/23)
- Bryan M. Tirrell, Forester, US Forest Service NRS FIA, completion of Northern Research Station Forest Inventory Plot as part of a national inventory study, Goat Lot Road, Madison (6/1/2023-9/30/2023)
- CTDEEP (Ansel Aarrestad, Environmental Analyst II) - To monitor and assess the surface waters across CT as part of a probabilistic study. Install temperature logger, diatom community survey, fish community survey, macroinvertebrate community survey, swap temperature logger, remove temperature logger. Mill River (41.394847-72.892324) off of Riverside Drive, Hamden (3/20/2023-3/20/2024)
- New Haven Youth and Recreation (Shashinka) – Fishing Derby to allow inner city children a fishing experience, Maltby Lakes, (4/22/23 raindate of 4/23/23).
- Yale University Film and Media Studies (Kilga) – Yale thesis film about a group of young students who retreat to the forest to reconnect with nature, Maltby Lakes, (4/20/23 – 4/23/23).
- UConn, Dept of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (Dr. Mark Urban) – Research on pond amphibians - Totoket mountain in Northford; ridge north of Lake Gaillard; 60 ponds distributed to the west and east of Big Gulph Brook (3/1/2023- 3/1/2024)
- Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (Dr. Chris T. Maier, Agricultural Scientist)- Conduct research on insects, particularly longhorned beetles (continuation of 2022 projects), and flower flies and to survey for abnormal emergencies of periodical cicadas, Near Lake Gaillard and Totoket Mountain complex (North Branford); near Beaver Head Road, especially Beaver Head Swamp (Guilford); forest off Dogburn Road (Orange); and along Hosley Avenue (Branford), (3/15/2023 – 11/30/2023)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
    - Agricultural agreements – Executed amendment to Christmas tree agreement Miscio to have them manage the fields by North St. in North Branford.
    - North Branford, 215 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Sent draft license agreement to Regan.
    - Guilford, Great Hill Rd and Cooks La. (GU 9) – Sent letters to two abutters regarding encroachments. Sent draft license agreement to Wall.
    - Guilford, Beaver Head Rd. (GU 6) - Sent letters to two abutters regarding encroachments.
    - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Continued to correspond with consultant for Yale to place radio repeater at the tanks.
    - Hamden, 364 Putnam Ave. (HA 8) – Inspected property and emailed owner about having sediment and erosion controls in place.
    - Cell phone towers – Sent email to TMobile for them to use with town officials authorizing the work on the Rabbit Rock Tank (NO 1) generator.
    - Hamden, New Haven Country Club (HA 5) – Met with NHCC staff about the license agreement for overflow parking which is expiring at the end of the year.
    - Trespassing – Recorded instances of trespassing including ATV's, hikers with dogs and horseback riders at Sugarloaf, and hikers in unpermitted areas, note on logger's machine at Hammonasset, illegal parking at Hammonasset, and illegal fishing at Hammonasset.

- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford, Seymour, Guilford, and Orange. Met with UConn staff to look at data they collected at the two slash wall harvests using a LiDAR camera.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	60 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	0.5 acres

- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Met with consultant who will help compile the DEEP permit application.
- Deer hunt – DPH annual report was submitted. Presentations about the 2022 hunt were given to the FMA, CAC and LUC. One hunter was barred from future hunts since he left his tree stand on the property.
- Hamden, tire dumping – Forwarded information on all the tire dumping we were aware of to Amy to check with local tire businesses.
- Bethany, Rt. 69 driveway – Gave information to Environmental Planning staff about a new driveway coming off Rt. 69 in Bethany south of Gaylord Mt. Rd. No sediment or erosion controls were observed.
- Boundaries – Completed remarking of boundaries in Durham, Madison, Guilford, Killingworth, and Woodbridge. Contacted Guilford Land Trust about possible unapproved activity on one of their easements.
- Solar projects – Discussed possible locations for solar arrays with various RWA staff. Attended virtual meeting with RWA staff and a consultant to discuss sites.
- Hamden, Eli Whitney Museum – Answered question from Operations staff about the responsibility for grounds maintenance. Corresponded with Eli Whitney Museum staff about proposal for a bioswale at the WWC and EWM parking lot.
- Drone flight – ISMT and NRA performed a drone flight at Shingle Hill Tanks.

Committee members discussed police staffing on RWA properties with management.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m., and will be held in-person at 90 Sargent Drive, New Haven, Connecticut. The committee will meet with management to review the FY 2024 budget.

At 6:40 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Malloy, seconded by Mr. Oslander, and unanimously carried, the committee meeting adjourned.

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Peter Betkoski, Chairman

April 19, 2023
Land Use Committee Meeting

Reservoir Levels (Percent Full)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average	Drought Status
March 31, 2023	98%	97%	91%	None

Rainfall (inches)

	Current Year	Previous Year	Historical Average
March 2023	3.83	2.49	4.30
Fiscal YTD (6/1/22 – 3/31/23)	33.46	40.70	38.31

Land We Need for the Water We Use Program (Dispositions/Acquisitions)

- Prospect, 200 Saddle Ct. – The Watershed Fund approved our grant application. Exchanged emails and reviewed closing documents including draft deed. Scheduled closing for April 4th.
- Madison – Corresponded with property owner of 7+/- acres.
- North Haven – Corresponded with property owner of 14+/- acres.
- North Branford – Corresponded with property owner of 75+/- acres.
- Cheshire – Corresponded with property owner of 56+/- acres.
- North Branford, Beech St. and Pomps La. properties (NB 4) – Murtha shared some of the work the title searcher completed. Town Planner signed off on the surveys to subdivide the parcels and they were filed on the land records. Murtha will follow-up with the Assessor about subdividing the "island" parcel. Submitted draft disposition application to Sunny.

Rental houses:

- Hamden, 233 Skiff St. (HA 9A) – P&Z Commission reviewed the matter and sent to Town Council. Town Council needs to sign off and authorize funds.
- Seymour, 189 Maple St. – Spoke with owner and sent him copies of the deeds since he asked about the insurance requirement.

Forestry Update

- Killingworth - East Hammonasset Leaf Screen Thinning, (KI 4) – **80% complete.**
- Hamden - Overstory removal and Tornado Salvage, (HA 36) – Not started yet. May be pushed to summer due to ground conditions.
- Killingworth - N. Chestnut Hill Patch Cuts, (KI 6) – **70% complete.**

  - Participated in project work and field planning meeting for upcoming bat research around Lake Gaillard.
  - Organized meeting with US Forest Service grant administrator regarding LSR grant.
  - Investigated and responded to timber sale trespassing issues at the KI 6 timber harvest.
  - Participated in a US Forest Service presentation on Urban and Community Forestry grant opportunities through the Inflation Reduction Act programs.
  - Conducted a walk-through with the logger for the Crosby salvage operation. Distributed letters and hung signs at entrance to landing.

Recreation

- Walk with Forester at Genesee had 7 participants.
- In addition to the physical newsletter, O&C sent it out via email to the permittees that we have email addresses for.

- Received recreation activity permit from DPH for relocation of part of the New England Trail in Guilford. Submitted LUP amendment to Sunny.
- CFPA asked to relocate another part of the New England Trail away from Hart Rd. in Guilford,
- A permit holder reported a new eagle nest at Lake Saltonstall. Reported the discovery to DEEP.
- Cleared trails at Lake Saltonstall and Big Gulph.
- Two new recreation staff members were on-boarded.
- Installed the docks for the upcoming fishing season.
- Repaired picnic table at the Maltby Lakes.
- Soft plastic bait recycling containers were put up at Saltonstall, Chamberlain and Maltby Lakes.
- The fish liberation permit was submitted to DEEP for the stocking of trout at the Maltby Lakes and arrangements made for their delivery.

	March		February	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
Permit Holders	4,954	5,712	4,822	5,601

Special Activity Permits

- Resources in Search and Rescue, Inc.-(Ms. Celeste Robitaille and designees)- Training of Search and Rescue K9 teams to locate lost or missing individuals, Two Cornwall Avenue, Prospect, (03/22/2023-3/22/2024)
- Resources in Search and Rescue, Inc.-(Ms. Celeste Robitaille and designees)- Training of Search and Rescue K9 teams to locate lost or missing individuals, 20 Rimmon Road, Seymour
- (03/22/2023 – 3/22/2024)
- UConn, Dept. of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (Professor Eric Schultz) – Research on alewives (fishes) for genetic study, Lake Saltonstall, (8/1/2023-9/30/2023)
- Northeast Work & Safety Boats, LLC (Jack Casey) – inspection of bridge 00186 Lake Saltonstall (4/3/23-4/4/23)

Other items

- Encroachments/agreements –
    - North Branford, 215 Forest Rd. (NB 17) – Executed license agreement for lawn and bench.
    - Guilford, Great Hill Rd and Cooks La. (GU 9) – Executed license agreement for a shed partially over the line as well as parking a vehicle over the line.
    - Killingworth, Bunker Hill Rd. (KI 9A) – Found deer stand on the line and sent letter to abutter.
    - Orange, 869 Dogburn Rd. (OR 7) – Observed abutter using our property to access the rear of their lot. Sent letter to cease and repair damage.
    - Orange, 43 Pine Crest Dr. (OR 3) – Sent letter and spoke to abutter about lawn and other encroachments. Sent them a draft license agreement to review.
    - Orange, 820 Ogg Meadow Rd. (OR 2) – Sent letter and met with abutters about firewood stored over the property line. Abutter said they would move the stacks.
    - West Haven, Shingle Hill tanks (WH 7) – Continued to correspond with consultant for Yale to place radio repeater at the tanks.
    - Cell phone towers – Corresponded with TMobile staff about new generator at the Rabbit Rock Tank (NO 1).
    - Hamden, New Haven Country Club (HA 5) – Reviewed the red-lined agreement from the NHCC staff.
    - Trespassing – Recorded instances of trespassing including ATV's, dirt bikes, hikers without permits, illegal fishing, mountain bikers in unapproved locations, and hikers with dogs.

- Invasive plants – Treated or documented invasive plant populations in North Branford, East Haven, Madison, and Branford. Issued PO to clear field of invasives in Guilford. Corresponded with Madison resident about plans for invasive management at Coan Pond.

Invasive Species Documented/ Mapped (ac)	302.4 acres
Invasive Species Treated (ac/MH)	0.8 acres

- East Haven, Beach Ave. watermain – Met Tighe and Bond staff at the site to work on the DEEP permit application. Told Murtha staff to go ahead with the title policy.
- Deer hunt - The lottery applications for the 2023 deer hunt went out March 6. The applications are due May 2.
- Hamden, tire dumping – Met with North Lake Condo's staff to look at tires dumped on the Atria Larson property. Talked to consultant hired by town about what we have observed.
- Boundaries – Completed remarking of boundaries in Durham, Madison, Orange, Killingworth, and Woodbridge.
- The Watershed Fund – A special permittee gave us a check for $250 to go to a charity. Forwarded to The Watershed Fund.
- Yale Golf Course remodeling – Spoke with various local residents about Yale's plans to restore some of the gold course.
- Prospect Reservoir – Reviewed plan for dredged materials from the reservoir and sent comments to Engineering.
- Drone flights - Performed one drone flight at West River to document the DAF project. Performed a drone flight to document manure issue in Bethany.

Attachments

- March 3, 2023 - EPA gives Connecticut $18M to prevent harmful chemicals in drinking water – WTNH
- March 15, 2023 - EPA proposes first standards to make drinking water safer from 'forever chemicals' – CNN
- March 14, 2023 - EPA's New 'Forever Chemicals' Limits: What It Means In CT – CT Patch
- April 9, 2023 - CT's public water systems may soon need to treat for PFAS – CT Post

Upcoming Agenda Items

May 2023 -

EPA gives Connecticut $18M to prevent harmful chemicals in drinking water

by: Braley Dodson - WTNH - Mar 3, 2023

HARTFORD, Conn. (WTNH) — The Environmental Protection Agency has given Connecticut $18 million in funding to prevent per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS, from entering drinking water.

PFAS are chemicals that are used to make products that resist oil, stains and water.

“What an important and remarkable step, to recognize that it isn’t just our big water systems, but smaller ones, and those in our disadvantage communities that are going to need help to address contamination by PFAS and other emerging contaminants,” Connecticut Department of Public Health Commissioner Manisha Juthani said.

PFAS have been in household, commercial and industrial products for years. Exposure to them can lead to immune system problems, high cholesterol levels and some cancers.

The EPA also plans to restrict discharges of the chemicals.

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EPA proposes first standards to make drinking water safer from ‘forever chemicals’

By Jen Christensen, CNN - March 15, 2023

The US Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday proposed the first national drinking water standard for “forever chemicals” that are dangerous to human health. The move could radically affect drinking water for nearly everyone in the United States.

The new rule intends to set drinking water standards for six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS or “forever chemicals.” PFAS are a family of ubiquitous synthetic chemicals that linger in the environment and the human body, where they can cause serious health problems.

Although there are thousands of PFAS chemicals, according to the National Institutes of Health, under the rule, water systems would have to monitor for six specific chemicals, notify the public about PFAS levels and work to reduce them if levels go above the standard allowed.

“I am thrilled to announce that EPA is taking yet another bold step to protect public health,” said US Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan at a news conference on Tuesday in Wilmington, North Carolina. “Folks, this is a tremendous step forward in the right direction. We anticipate that when fully implemented, this rule will prevent thousands of deaths and reduce tens of thousands of serious PFAS related illnesses.”

Regan said the proposed rule would protect the health of people for generations. He characterized PFAS contamination as “one of the most pressing environmental and public health concerns in the modern world.”

The agency chose these chemicals because it has the clearest science about their impact on human health and said it is evaluating additional chemicals, as well.

The EPA’s proposed limits set the allowable levels for these chemicals so low that they could not be easily detected.

The proposal would regulate two chemicals, PFOA and PFOS, at 4 parts per trillion (ppt). For PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS and GenX chemicals, the EPA proposes not one standard for each but a limit for a mix of them.

Water systems would have to determine whether the levels of these PFAS pose a potential risk. They may need to install treatment or take other action to reduce PFAS levels, the agency said, and systems may also even need to switch to different water sources.

Found in homes across the country

The proposal would be one of the first new chemical standards that updates the Safe Drinking Water Act since 1996. The proposed standards would be much stricter than the EPA suggested in 2016, when its health advisories recommended PFAS concentrations in drinking water of no more than 70 ppt.

In June, based on the latest science, the EPA issued health advisories that said the chemicals are much more hazardous to human health than scientists originally thought and are probably more dangerous even at levels thousands of times lower than previously believed.

EPA Commissioner Regan established the EPA Council on PFAS as soon as he came into office in 2021.

“Despite previous administration’s anti-science stance which severely strained EPA financial and human capital, I charged this council with undertaking a comprehensive review of the problem and identifying solutions that we can implement immediately,” Regan said.

In October 2021, the EPA released its PFAS strategic roadmap. In November, the EPA shared a one-year progress report and set an internal deadline to propose this rule by the end of last year, but the proposal was going through an interagency review.

Now that the proposed rule is out, it will be open to a period of public comment. The EPA will take those comments into consideration and issue a final decision on the rule, expected later this year.

Public water systems generally have three years from the date of the regulation to comply, the agency said.

The chemicals have been widely used since the 1940s in hundreds of kinds of common household items, where they help repel water and oil. They can be found in water-repellent clothes, furniture and carpet, in nonstick pans, paints, cosmetics, cleaning products and food packaging, and in firefighting foams.

The extremely strong elemental bonds that make the chemicals repel oil and water also make it difficult for them to break down in the body or in the environment.

A 2019 study suggested that PFAS chemicals could be found in 98% of the US population.

The chemicals can primarily settle in the blood, kidney and liver, and exposure can lead to serious health problems like cancer, obesity, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, decreased fertility, liver damage and hormone suppression, according to the EPA.

Last year, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine issued guidelines for doctors to test, diagnose and treat the millions of people who have a history of elevated exposure to these chemicals.

Attempts at regulation

Manufacturing of PFAS chemicals has already started to change.

Manufacturer 3M recently announced it would stop making them by the end of 2025. The American Chemistry Council, an association that represents chemical makers, said that PFOA and PFOS were phased out of production by its members more than eight years ago. “We support restrictions on their use globally, and we support drinking water standards for PFOA and PFOS based on the best available science,” the council said in an email to CNN. It does, however, say it that has “serious concerns” about the science that the EPA used to create the rule that it calls “conservative.”

At the federal level, the US Food and Drug Administration phased out the use of certain PFAS chemicals in 2016. The FDA and manufacturers also agreed in 2020 to phase out some PFAS chemicals from food packaging and other items that came into contact with food. However, FDA monitoring of the environment showed that the chemicals tend to linger, as the “forever” name implies.

A replacement that many chemical companies have been using, GenX, may also be problematic, according to the EPA. Animal studies have shown that it may affect the liver, kidneys and immune system, and it might be linked to cancer.

In June, for the first time, the EPA issued final advisories for limits in drinking water of GenX, considered a replacement for PFOA, and PFBS, a replacement for PFOS: less than 10 ppt and 2,000 ppt, respectively.

The Biden administration has taken some steps to help eliminate exposure to this pollution. As a part of the 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, $10 billion was made available for cleanup of contaminants like PFAS in drinking water.

In February, the EPA also announced $2 billion available to address contaminants like PFAS in drinking water in small, rural and disadvantaged communities. Regan said the Biden administration is asking Congress for more resources to clean up PFAS pollution.

Environmental groups applaud move

Tuesday’s announcement “is really historic and long overdue,” said Melanie Benesh, vice president of government affairs for the Environmental Working Group**,** an environmental research and advocacy group. “There are a lot of communities that have been exposed to these chemicals for decades.

“It’s clear that these chemicals are toxic at very low levels and the EPA is responding to that risk, and I think this is a huge win for public health,” she added.

A new rule, paired with actual resources to clean up contamination and to make sure communities can test for these chemicals, is an important step, said Sarah Doll, national director of Safer States, a group that works to help communities prevent harm caused by dangerous chemicals.

“We also need the polluters, those who actually caused the harm, to help pay for the cleanup,” Doll said. Seventeen state attorneys general and others are suing now several makers and users of these chemicals. “This is a first step. It’s great. It’s really important, and we’re going to need additional resources, especially from those who have caused harm.”

With the proposed rule, the EPA is catching up to 10 states that have enforceable drinking water standards for these chemicals: Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Wisconsin.

“We’re very excited that the administration is taking these steps forward. They represent a very positive step in the right direction,” said Liz Hitchcock, director of federal policy for Toxic-Free Future, a group that advocates for the use of safer products and chemicals.

But no EPA water standard is going to solve the problem on its own. Manufacturers of items that use these chemicals will need to urgently find alternatives.

“We’ll keep polluting our drinking water if we don’t stop the uses of these chemicals,” Hitchcock said.

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA), which represents the country’s largest publicly owned water utilities in the US, said it is reviewing the proposed rule to assess the analysis the EPA used to determine what to regulate and at what levels. It critcized the shorter, 60-day timeframe for public comment, saying that the federal government’s Office of Management and Budget had five months to review the proposed rule that comes with thousands of pages to review and is a complex piece of regulation.

“AMWA intends to provide EPA a robust set of comments to help strengthen the rule and ensure decisions are made with the best available science while taking costs into account, as required under the Safe Drinking Water Act,” said Tom Dobbins, CEO of AMWA.

Dobbins added that the association is concerned about the overall operating and maintanance cost and quantified capital that drinking water utilities will have to take on to comply with the proposal, which the EPA estimates will be $772 million, according to the association. The estimate is the cost per year, according to the EPA.

There is a $1.2 billion annual cost savings based on the public health benefits “which is often missed in conversations on cost,” the EPA said in an email to CNN.

The AMWA said it will be working with experts to determine if the EPA’s cost benefit analysis **overall** is accurate.

“Ultimately, without more federal support for upgrading current treatment technologies, average Americans will have to pay the cost of further treatment through higher rates for their water,” Dobbins added.

Users will also have to reduce demand. In one instance, the US Department of Defense has set a schedule to get PFAS out of firefighting foam by October and to stop use of it by October 2024. Hundreds of military properties have been contaminated by foam used to put out jet fuel fires.

The proposal is now open for public comment before the standards are finalized.

People who want to make their water safer in the meantime can use point-of-entry or point-of-use filters with activated carbon or reverse osmosis membranes, which have been shown to be effective at removing PFAS from water, the EPA says.

EPA's New 'Forever Chemicals' Limits: What It Means In CT

PFAS contamination has been detected in the water supply at two Connecticut sites, according to a new report from the EPA.

Rich Kirby, Patch Staff - Mar 14, 2023

CONNECTICUT — The Environmental Protection Agency on Tuesday gave water officials in Connecticut more information on what they’ll have to do to reduce harmful PFAS "forever chemicals" in water supplies.

The EPA said limiting these chemicals to the lowest level tests can detect will save thousands of lives and prevent serious illnesses, including cancer. This is the first time the EPA has proposed regulating a toxic group of compounds that are widespread, dangerous and expensive to remove from the water.

PFAS, or per- and polyfluorinated substances, don't degrade in the environment and are linked to a broad range of health issues, including low birthweight babies and kidney cancer. Drinking water is a significant PFAS exposure for people, the agency said.

No state is untouched by PFAS contamination, according to a map compiled by the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit organization sometimes criticized for exaggerating certain toxicity risks. But a growing body of scholarly and government research backs the assertion of both the EPA and EWG that, even at low levels currently, these chemicals can cause harm over a person’s lifetime.

PFAS contamination has been detected in the water supply at just two Connecticut sites: the National Guard Stone's Ranch Military Reservation in East Lyme, and Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks.

Radhika Fox, an assistant EPA administrator for water, told The Associated Press the federal proposal is a "transformational change" for improving the safety of drinking water in the United States. The agency estimates the rule could reduce PFAS exposure for nearly 100 million Americans, decreasing rates of cancer, heart attacks and birth complications.

"The science is clear that long-term exposure to PFAS is linked to significant health risks," Fox said.

The chemicals had been used since the 1940s in consumer products and industry, including in nonstick pans, food packaging and firefighting foam. Their use is now mostly phased out in the U.S., but some still remain.

The proposal would set strict limits of 4 parts per trillion, the lowest level that can be reliably measured, for two common types of PFAS compounds called PFOA and PFOS. In addition, the EPA wants to regulate the combined amount of four other types of PFAS. Water providers will have to monitor for PFAS.

The proposed limits are subject to a public comment period that will likely extend until the end of the year, and changes could be made in the agency's final rule. Water providers will have time to adjust to the new standards, especially utilities with high levels of contamination, but they could face fines or loss of federal grants if problems persist.

The EPA recently made $2 billion available to states to get rid of contaminates such as PFAS, and plans to release billions more in the coming years.

The agency also is providing technical support to smaller communities that will soon be forced to install treatment systems, and there's funding in the 2021 infrastructure law for water system upgrades.

But still, it will be expensive for utilities to install new equipment, and the burden will be especially tough for small towns with fewer resources.

"This is a problem that has been handed over to utilities through no fault of their own," Sri Vedachalam, director of water equity and climate resilience at Environmental Consulting & Technology Inc., told the AP.

Many communities will need to balance the new PFAS requirements with removing poisonous lead pipes and replacing aged water mains prone to rupturing, Vedachalam said.

Fox said there "isn't a one-size answer" to how communities will prioritize their needs. She said, however, that there are billions of dollars in federal resources available for water improvements.

Several states have already imposed PFAS drinking water limits. Officials in Michigan, which has the tightest standards of any state, said costs to remove PFAS in communities where it was found were reasonable.

If the rules are finalized and imposed, many communities will learn they have been supplying drinking water with harmful compounds. When people learn of problems, they may stop using tap water altogether, distrusting its safety, and turn instead to bottled water.

That's often a more expensive choice and one that can have negative health effects if people replace tap water with sugary drinks that cause cavities and contribute to obesity and other health problems.

“This,” Fox said, “is such an issue of concern for people.”

The proposal would also regulate other types of PFAS like GenX Chemicals, which manufacturers used as a substitute when PFOA and PFOS were phased out of consumer products. The proposal would regulate the cumulative health threat of those compounds and mandate treatment if that threat is too high.

"Communities across this country have suffered far too long from the ever-present threat of PFAS pollution," EPA Administrator Michael Regan told the AP.

The EPA's proposal could prevent tens of thousands of PFAS-related illnesses, he said, "and marks a major step toward safeguarding all our communities from these dangerous contaminants."

CT's public water systems may soon need to treat for PFAS

The 'forever chemicals' have already been found in water supplies across Connecticut, and a new federal regulation could establish an enforceable limit

by Andrew Brown April 9, 2023

Public water utilities throughout Connecticut may soon be required to install millions of dollars in new treatment technology to help remove "forever chemicals" from the tap water that tens of thousands of people drink every day.

Those upgrades will be necessary to comply with a new federal regulation that seeks to limit people's exposure to the chemicals, known as perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances — PFAS for short.

The newly proposed rule would, for the first time, establish an enforceable limit on some of the most common types of PFAS in public drinking water systems — a step that environmental advocates have been demanding for years.

Environmental studies have shown that PFAS contamination is prevalent throughout the United States and the rest of the world.

Nearly every American has some level of the compounds in their bodies. The chemicals have been found in rivers, ponds, soil, aquifers and many drinking water systems throughout the country.

That includes traces that have been found in some of Connecticut's largest public water systems.

The chemical properties of PFAS made them useful in many manufacturing processes. The man-made compounds were used for decades to produce things like nonstick pans, waterproof clothing, stain-resistant carpets and an industrial fire fighting foam that was used at airports, military bases and local fire stations.

PFAS are often referred to as "forever chemicals" because they don't break down easily in the environment, and the compounds are known to build up in people's blood over time.

The chemicals don't pose an immediate risk for people who ingest limited amounts through drinking water. But public health officials are still concerned about the long-term health implications for communities that frequently consume even small amounts of the chemicals over a lifetime.

Epidemiological studies and toxicology research found potential links between the compounds and a number of negative health outcomes, including developmental issues, immunological problems, thyroid disorders and kidney or testicular cancers.

Those human health concerns prompted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish advisory limits for several types of PFAS in drinking water systems in 2016.

But those limits were only recommendations. They did not require public water utilities to treat for the chemicals, even if testing found significant levels of the compounds in the water.

That is now expected to change.

EPA officials announced on March 14 that the federal agency plans to implement mandatory enforcement levels for six different types of PFAS that have been found in public drinking water systems.

That regulatory announcement is a big step for most of the country, including Connecticut.

Up to this point, only a handful of states, including Maine, Michigan, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Hampshire and Vermont, enacted enforceable limits for the chemicals in their public water systems.

The EPA's newly proposed regulation would be mandatory nationwide, and it will be even stricter than most of the existing state laws. The regulation does not apply to the 322,000 private drinking water wells in Connecticut.

The two most common types of PFAS that will be regulated under the federal rule are chemicals known as PFOA and PFOS. The EPA said it will require public water systems to add new filtration technology or find different sources of water if those chemicals are found in concentrations above 4 parts per trillion.

For perspective, 1 part per trillion is comparable to finding a single drop of the chemicals in 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

That extremely low limit is being put in place in order to protect people from a lifetime of exposure to the chemicals. But it will mean that many public water utilities that previously thought their water was acceptable will now need to alter their treatment plants to deal with the chemicals.

Christopher Bellona, a civil and environmental engineering professor at the Colorado School of Mines, said the new EPA regulation marks a "generational shift" in water treatment in the United States.

The fact that PFAS contamination is so widespread throughout the country, Bellona said, means that many public water systems will soon be required to adapt to the new rules.

“It’s a very challenging problem, and it just seems to be getting more complicated as time goes on,” Bellona said.

What it means for Connecticut

It’s unclear at this point how many public water systems in Connecticut are supplying tap water that contains PFAS levels above 4 parts per trillion.

That’s because the chemical sampling that has been conducted at public water systems in recent years was voluntary.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health, like agencies in most other states, only has an advisory limit in place. That public health advisory started at 70 parts per trillion in 2016 and was reduced last year to as little as 10 parts per trillion.

But it remained simply a recommendation.

That meant the operators of public water systems were not required to regularly report testing results for the chemicals like they do for mercury, arsenic, lead and a host of other regulated contaminants.

State officials encouraged the public systems to conduct sampling and to voluntarily share the results with the state and their water customers. But not all of them did that.

There is no mention of PFAS testing results in the most recent water quality reports for the Waterbury Water Department, the Danbury Water Department, the New Britain Water Department, the Meriden Water Division, the Bristol Water Department, the Middletown Water Department, the Southington Water Department or the Metropolitan District Commission, which supplies water to roughly 390,000 people in Hartford and 11 other surrounding communities.

But Connecticut isn't immune to the problem.

Some of the state's largest drinking water providers have publicly shared PFAS testing results in recent years, and those results indicate that those utilities have pockets of PFAS contamination that will need to be managed once the new federal rule goes into effect.

The Regional Water Authority, which supplies 418,000 people in and around New Haven, found PFAS concentrations just above 4 parts per trillion at some of its wells in Cheshire, which supplies roughly 3% to 5% of the utility's water.

Aquarion, an investor-owned utility that delivers water to an estimated 695,000 people in Connecticut, reported PFAS concentrations above 4 parts per trillion in water sources that supply parts of Darien, Simsbury, Danbury, Woodbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Greenwich, Newtown and a number of its other local systems.

Connecticut Water, another investor-owned utility that serves more than 243,000 people in the state, documented similar findings at its systems in Avon, Vernon, Brooklyn, Guilford and several other locations.

And the Manchester Water Department, which serves more than 51,000 people in that town, recently reported PFAS levels as high as 21 parts per trillion at one of its water intake locations.

'A top priority'

Manisha Juthani, Connecticut's public health commissioner, said her agency and Gov. Ned Lamont's administration are closely monitoring the most recent testing results from the state's public water systems.

“This has been a top priority for this governor, for this administration,” Juthani told the Connecticut Mirror.

Juthani, who was appointed as the state's top health official in 2021, acknowledged that Connecticut does not have up-to-date testing results for every community water system in the state. But she estimated that roughly 65% of the systems are reporting PFAS results voluntarily to DPH, even if they are not sharing the results publicly with their customers yet.

About 37% of those that reported have levels above the 4 parts per trillion threshold, she said. She would not identify which systems those are.

According to Juthani, federal officials recently told her agency the new limits for PFAS in drinking water could be rolled out over a three-year period to give state regulators and public water utilities enough time to comply with the regulations.

Connecticut is likely in a better position than many other states, Juthani argued, because of the public attention PFAS has received in recent years. She said DPH has also been in communication with the public water providers about the potential for additional regulations surrounding the chemicals.

“I do think we are ahead of the game, but we really won’t know the full scope of the problem until we have the data,” Juthani said.

Officials with Aquarion and Connecticut Water, the two investor-owed utilities in the state, said they recognize the need for enforceable limits on PFAS, which is why they've began voluntarily testing for the chemicals several years ago and publicly disclosing the results to their customers.

"Connecticut Water supports the EPA's and Connecticut Department of Public Health's efforts to protect the quality of drinking water, and it will continue to closely monitor EPA's proposal and will invest in treatment systems or take other actions as needed, to remain in compliance with water quality standards," Daniel Meaney, the company's spokesman, wrote in a statement.

Aquarion also noted the significant cost that will be required to bring all of the public water systems into compliance with the new rules.

"While many details remain to be finalized, it is clear that sustained capital investment in infrastructure and a long-term commitment to treatment will be needed to both comply with the proposed regulatory standards and ensure the safety of customers' water," the company wrote in a statement.

Peter Fazekas, a spokesman for Aquarion, said the company does not yet have an estimate of how much it will cost to reduce PFAS in its drinking water systems. But he provided an example of a recent upgrade the company completed at one of its water treatment plants in New Hampshire.

That upgrade, which added an advanced filtration system to a single well, cost the company $1.7 million to complete, Fazekas said, and that doesn't include the cost of ongoing maintenance to keep the system working.

Treatment options

There is technology available that is capable of filtering PFAS out of public drinking water supplies, and those systems are already in commercial use in other parts of the country where much higher concentrations of the chemicals polluted public drinking water.

Bellona, the environmental engineering professor from Colorado, said the two most common treatment systems for PFAS require water to be run through large filters containing "granular activated carbon" or "ion exchange resins."

Both of those substances, he said, absorb PFAS as the drinking water passes through the filters. But both systems are rather expensive, Bellona said, and they are far different from other steps that traditionally take place at water treatment plants.

"I would consider using absorbents to treat water to be an advanced treatment process," he said. "It's not simple."

Bellona has firsthand experience in putting those advanced processes to use. He personally helped the public water utility in Fountain, Colo., test a carbon filtration system to remove PFAS from that city's water supply in 2017.

Those trials ultimately led to the city building a new multimillion-dollar treatment plant to permanently clean its drinking water. That project was financed, however, by the U.S. Air Force, which was responsible for polluting the city's water wells with the industrial firefighting foam.

The public water systems in Connecticut are not going to have that source of money available to them. But state health officials said there is likely to be other federal money available.

The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was passed in late 2021, included millions of dollars in funding for PFAS treatment at public water systems.

Connecticut health officials said there is roughly $18.8 million available this year through the state's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund that can be used to fund PFAS treatment projects. And state officials said more funding is likely to become available in the coming years.

Juthani said that federal investment will help to ensure that public water systems can comply with the new federal regulations without charging customers for the entire cost.

“There are several streams of funding from the federal government coming to the state that our water systems are aware of,” Juthani said. “We've been in communication with them for a long time that this money is coming. It's part of our intended use plan, and that's going to be there and available for the next several years.”