

PFC CONTAMINATION OF ALABAMA'S DRINKING WATER



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WHAT ARE PFC'S?

- Perflourinated chemicals (PFCs) encompass a large group of manufactured chemical compounds widely used to make everyday products (e.g. cookware, apparel, and carpet) more resistant to stains, grease, and water. Formerly used in aqueous film forming foam to battle jet-fueled fires on military bases and at airports.
- Two most common PFCs are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS).
- PFCs resist degradation in the environment and accumulate in the body with repeated exposure.
- Human health risks include testicular cancer, kidney cancer, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, high cholesterol, and pregnancy-induced hypertension.
- In May 2016, EPA issued new lifetime health advisory of 70 ppt for combined PFOA/PFOS levels.

IMPACT ON ALABAMA WATER SYSTEMS

- EPA testing between 2013 and 2015 revealed PFCs were present in the drinking water of 15 million Americans in 27 states.
- Eight water systems in Alabama initially reported above the limit. Three systems filed lawsuits:
 - **West Morgan-East Lawrence Water Authority** sued 3M, Dyneon, and Daikin.
 - **Gadsden Water Works & Sewer Board** and **Centre Sewer Board** each sued 30+ carpet manufacturers located upstream in Dalton, GA, chemical suppliers, and chemical manufacturers.
- Plaintiffs seek compensation for lost profits after switching to other sources and to install filtration systems capable of removing PFCs. WM-EL agreed to a \$5 million settlement with Daikin to cover its \$4 million filtration system.
- We are currently investigating potential cases for two other water systems we represent.

FUTURE OF WATER CONTAMINATION

- Chemical replacements may not necessarily be safer alternatives. For example, there are no studies about the health risks associated with DuPont-Chemour's PFC replacement (Gen-X) which has contaminated the Cape Fear River in North Carolina.
- Many chemicals contaminating water sources are not regulated under the Safe Water Drinking Act. Testing occurs every 5 years under the EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule. This is how the extent of PFC contamination was uncovered.
- Many wastewater treatment plants are not equipped with filtration systems that can remove all harmful chemicals. This may require additional upgrades to keep up with new testing and stricter regulations.