

EPA Proposes to Scale Back PFAS Drinking Water Regulations



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On May 18, 2026, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency **announced** two proposed rules that would significantly reshape the federal regulatory framework for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water. The **first proposed rule**, the PFOA and PFAS Compliance Extension Rule, would uphold enforceable drinking water limits for the two most common PFAS compounds (perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS)), but would allow water systems to request an extension of the compliance deadline an additional two years, to 2031, to comply with the enforceable limits. The **second proposed rule**, the PFAS Rescission Rule, would rescind federal drinking water regulations for the other PFAS compounds currently subject to drinking water standards (perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA, or GenX), and mixtures of these three PFAS, plus perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS)), citing the need to correct prior procedural deficiencies under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The proposed rules build on the regulatory framework first established in April 2024, by the prior administration, which set enforceable limits for six PFAS compounds. As we have reported previously, in **April 2025**, EPA announced its strategy to address PFAS contamination. Shortly thereafter, in **May 2025**, EPA announced its plan to scale back and extend compliance deadlines for federal PFAS drinking water regulations, stating that it intended to retain standards for PFOA and PFOS, and to reconsider regulations for the other four compounds: PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS.

For affected parties, these developments mean that compliance with PFOA and PFOS standards remains mandatory, but water systems may have until 2031 to meet the enforceable limits if they request an extension. Entities currently preparing for compliance with PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS should closely monitor the rescission rulemaking, as federal obligations for these compounds may be eliminated, though state-level requirements could still apply.

The EPA will hold a virtual public hearing on July 7, 2026, to receive verbal comments on both of the proposed regulations. EPA will present information on the proposed rules and exemption schedules before opening the hearing for public comment. Registration is required to attend or provide comments, and the deadline to pre-register to speak is July 1, 2026. Interested parties can learn more about the public hearing and register [here](#).

Babst Calland's Environmental Practice Group is closely tracking EPA's PFAS actions, and our attorneys are available to provide strategic advice on how developing PFAS regulations may affect your business. For more information or answers to questions, please contact Sloane Wildman at (202) 853-3457 or swildman@babstcalland.com, Jordan N. Brown at (202) 853-3459 or jbrown@babstcalland.com, or your Babst Calland relationship attorney.