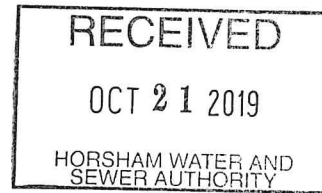


N.H. Squares Off With 3M In Court Fight Over New PFAS Water Standards

By ANNIE ROPEIK • OCT 18, 2019



A Superior Court judge heard arguments Friday against New Hampshire's strict new limits on PFAS chemicals in public water supplies.

The major chemical company 3M and a group of local stakeholders want an injunction against the recently implemented rules.

3M's attorney laid out their arguments inside Merrimack Superior Court, as protesters outside denounced the involvement of the corporation that pioneered PFAS.

The chemicals don't break down in the environment and have been linked by some studies to serious health effects.

New Hampshire has been on the front lines of regulating PFAS, which aren't subject to enforceable federal standards. The state's new rules would require public water systems to test and in some cases treat for low levels of the chemicals.

The regulations also apply to groundwater contamination. Next, the state is expected to begin developing limits on PFAS in surface water.

3M's lawyer says the state didn't allow enough public input on its final drinking water standards, or fully analyze what they would cost local water utilities.

Attorney Terri Pastori represented the local plaintiffs, including the Plymouth water and sewer district.

"In the end, your honor, this is about the integrity of a process, and the way this process [was] done is not consistent with how we do things in New Hampshire," Pastori said. "It doesn't hurt the state to make it go back and do what it should have done to begin with."

Arguing for the state, Assistant Attorney General Allen Brooks said the Department of Environmental Services did follow the required process.

He said if the judge approved the injunction now and stopped the enforcement of the new standards, people in the state could be harmed by water contamination.

The state is also suing 3M and other companies for allegedly causing that contamination.

The Superior Court judge didn't indicate when he will rule on the company's injunction request.