

# The Intelligencer

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## House reps renew push for PFAS drinking standards

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HORSHAM WATER AND  
SEWER AUTHORITY

The currently stalled PFAS Action Act of 2019 could get implemented by adding it to a defense spending law in the upcoming fiscal year's budget.

A bipartisan cadre of U.S. House members are renewing a push to regulate chemicals that have contaminated water supplies in Bucks and eastern Montgomery counties and nationwide.

The PFAS Action Act of 2019 passed the House in a 247-159 vote on Jan. 10, but has sat in the Senate's Committee on Environment and Public Works since then.

The act would set sweeping reform for the chemicals that have been linked to multiple health issues, including a deadline for the Environmental Protection Agency to set a national drinking water standard for PFAS.

With no apparent action coming from the upper chamber, Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, D-Michigan, reached out to colleagues to refile the resolution as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act later this week.

"PFAS contamination is poisoning our service members, their families communities near military bases and it's poisoning too many of our families, period," Dingell said during a press conference Tuesday.

The perfluorinated compounds have been used in many commercial, industrial and retail products for decades, but former and active military bases using firefighting foams have been linked as the source for PFAS contamination in many communities.

Horsham, Warminster and Warrington are among the communities in hit hardest by PFAS contamination since 2016.

The EPA set a lifetime health advisory limit of PFAS exposure at 70 parts per trillion that year, but public drinking water wells in the three local communities saw levels 100 times higher in some cases.

Local drinking water suppliers have worked to provide water with no detectable PFAS levels, but those upfront costs, like higher water rates, are being paid by affected residents.

The military has previously agreed to repay residents for costs to bring PFAS levels under the EPA's 70 ppt limit, but officials at every level have been pushing the Department of Defense to cover all related costs for cleanup.

Setting a national standard and adding PFAS to a federal list of hazardous substances could make existing and former military bases eligible for Superfund cleanup funding, supporters say.

Republican Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick, of Middletown, representing Bucks and eastern Montgomery counties, said the federal standard would also bring much-needed uniformity to how water providers treat PFAS contamination.

While local communities have their non-detect PFAS standards, Fitzpatrick said there is a "patchwork" of municipalities with wildly different standards in part due to a lack of federal guidance.

"We don't figure zip codes should determine whether you're drinking clean water or not," Fitzpatrick said Tuesday.

Fitzpatrick added that PFAS, sometimes called "forever chemicals," tend to spread outward over time, extending the contamination beyond military sites if left unchecked.

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