



New Reports Call into Question EPA Drinking Water Limit for PFOA

US EPA, CHEMICALS OF INTEREST, WATER

By LANA BECKETT, December 8, 2016

The **Environmental Working Group**¹⁾ took the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to task for failing to set a legal drinking water limit for PFOA, but significantly lowered the unenforceable **health advisory level**²⁾ last spring.

EWG reported that new health assessments from government scientists in New Jersey and Germany show that the EPA's research is flawed, its health advisory is still far too weak.

In June, a month after the EPA lowered its advisory level, the New Jersey Drinking Water Quality Institute proposed what it calls a **health-based maximum contaminant level (pdf)**³⁾ for PFOA in water of 14 parts per trillion, or ppt – five times lower than the EPA health advisory of 70 ppt. (The EPA advisory level is for the combined level of PFOA and the related chemical PFOS, formerly an ingredient in 3M's Scotchgard.) If New Jersey legislators adopt the recommendation as a drinking water standard, it will be the only legal limit on PFOA in the nation.

In proposing the health-based limit, the New Jersey scientists were very **critical of the EPA health advisory (pdf)**⁴⁾ finding, saying drinking water with PFOA at the advisory level would cause a significant increase in concentrations of the chemical in Americans' blood.

The **German Human Biomonitoring Commission**⁵⁾ went even further. German scientists determined that the level of PFOA in blood not expected to cause adverse health effects is below what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has already found in the average American, meaning that any additional exposure through drinking water should be avoided.

Resources for this article

1. Environmental Working Group

<http://www.ewg.org/research/teflon-chemical-harmful-at-smallest-doses>

2. health advisory level

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/supporting-documents-drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos>

3. health-based maximum contaminant level (pdf)

www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pdf/pfoa-hb--mcl-public-review-draftwithappendices.pdf

4. critical of the EPA health advisory (pdf)

www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/pdf/pfoa-hb--mcl-public-review-draftwithappendices.pdf

5. German Human Biomonitoring Commission

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00103-016-2437-1>