



Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies

Position on PFAS/PFOA

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of compounds that are ubiquitous in the environment; from urban to even remote rural areas, including surface water, groundwater, soil, and air. Exposure at certain levels to some PFAS such as the most widely studied compounds, PFOA and PFOS may adversely impact human health and the environment. The members of Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies (IAWA) continue their commitment, and support policies and actions towards the health and safety of the water in Illinois through the following guiding principles regarding PFAS.



IAWA Position	Description
Follow Sound Science	There are many headlines, sound bites, and sources of information with a wide array of perspectives regarding PFAS. The potential for misinformation is high. It is critical that policies and actions follow sound science. Therefore, to address PFAS effectively, policies, regulations and guidelines to address PFAS must be developed based on data and science such as risk assessments, defensible analytical methods, and phase out of PFAS production and use.
Implement Polluter Pays Policies	Wastewater agencies neither manufactured nor profited from PFAS – they are passive receivers. Likewise, wastewater treatment plants were neither designed for nor are easily adaptable to treat for PFAS. Ratepayers and the public at large should not bear the cost for addressing PFAS. Those who manufactured or sold these substances should be held responsible for cleanup costs.
Utilize Existing Source Control Regulatory Frameworks	Federal industrial pretreatment regulations, implemented decades ago, have successfully ensured pollutant reduction and source control for many other emerging concerns. These regulations should be utilized in coordination with the municipal clean water agency community and other stakeholders, such as industries and the agricultural sector, to properly address PFAS concerns.
Ensure Adequate Funding For Any Mandates	Regulations to address PFAS should consider the costs, funding sources, and logistics. Regulators may prematurely recommend and implement requirements that have no proper funding source for implementation or are impractical. For example, the cost and the logistics for sampling and analysis for PFAS are significantly greater and laboratory capacity more limited than for typical analyses of wastewater and biosolids. Therefore, through forums such as committees, municipal clean water agencies should be given the opportunity to participate in the development of federal and state regulations and permit conditions.
Beware of Unintended Consequences	It is imperative that regulators and other lawmakers consider the potential for unintended legal liability and other consequences. For example, poorly drafted laws and regulations, such as designation of PFAS as hazardous under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), may impose unintended liability or burdens on municipal clean water agencies and users of biosolids, such as the agricultural community.
Continue Beneficial Reuse of Biosolids that Meet Health and Safety Standards	The agricultural community relies on biosolids as a valuable source of nutrients. Yet, some states, have implemented drastic restrictions with limited scientific basis and consideration of unintended consequences, such as the ban on the beneficial reuse of biosolids in the state of Maine in 2022. These blanket restrictions should be avoided. Careful considerations based on science should be upheld to continue beneficial use of biosolids. For example, the state of Michigan, have developed regulatory frameworks to place some restrictions on beneficial reuse of biosolids when warranted.

The Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies ("IAWA") has formed a PFAS Committee comprised of clean water experts. The Committee provides advice and oversight regarding PFAS and utilizes technical experts when needed. Current membership of this panel can be found at www.ilwastewater.org. For questions, please contact any members of the Committee.