

The Honorable Dave Marsden
Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources
Senate of Virginia
201 N 9th St.
Richmond, VA 23219

The Honorable Alfonso Lopez
Chair, House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources
Virginia House of Delegates
201 N 9th St.
Richmond, VA 23219

May 23, 2025

Dear Chair Marsden and Chair Lopez,

As Mayor of the City of Alexandria, I write to urge the General Assembly to take decisive state-level action to protect Virginians from toxic PFAS chemicals in our drinking water, especially as the federal government begins to retreat from its responsibility to do so. With recent Environmental Protection Agency actions signaling a rollback of national protections, it is increasingly clear that Virginia must step in to protect the public's health.

The Biden Administration finalized historic national standards to limit PFAS exposure, which were formally endorsed by the Alexandria City Council. Efforts to weaken these standards threaten to reverse hard-won progress and place the health of our residents at risk.

As I am sure you are well aware, PFAS chemicals have been linked to serious health effects, including cancer, liver and immune system damage, and developmental issues in children. These substances persist in the environment and accumulate in our bodies, and they remain alarmingly present in drinking water across the country, including here in Virginia.

The City of Alexandria is committed to ensuring safe, clean drinking water for all residents. But localities cannot and should not bear this responsibility alone. The General Assembly has both the authority and the obligation to lead in protecting Virginians where federal action is falling short. While members of the General Assembly have taken important first steps to discuss, and address, PFAS contamination, including recent legislation introduced by Delegate David Bulova, Delegate Sam Rasoul, and Senator Jeremy McPike, it is clear that we must now move faster and further to protect Virginians from toxic chemicals in their drinking water.

In light of recent developments, I respectfully urge you and your committees to prioritize strong state-level protections against PFAS contamination during the current special session of the General Assembly to address the impacts of federal government actions on Virginia or during the 2026 regular General Assembly session.

Specifically, we ask you and your colleagues in the General Assembly to:

- Enact state laws that mirror or exceed the federal PFAS standards now at risk of being weakened;
- Provide clear regulatory authority to the Virginia Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Quality to monitor, limit, and remediate PFAS contamination; and,
- Establish a dedicated funding mechanism or grant program to help localities upgrade water infrastructure and comply with enhanced safety standards.

This is not a political issue; it is a matter of public health and environmental justice. Virginians deserve to know their drinking water is safe, and if the federal government won't ensure that, then Virginia must.

Thank you for your leadership and your continued commitment to the health and well-being of our communities. Alexandria stands ready to partner with you in this important work. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,

Mayor Alyia Gaskins
City of Alexandria

CC: Sen. Adam Ebbin
Del. Charniele Herring
Del. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker
Alexandria City Council