



Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus (GLLC)

Task Force on Emerging Contaminants

Policy Recommendations

Harmful levels of per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and plastic compounds have been found in drinking water, surface water, and groundwater, as well as in soil, air, fish and other wildlife in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. The GLLC's Task Force on Emerging Contaminants developed the following policy recommendations for Great Lakes state and provincial legislators to consider when pursuing policies to prevent and remediate contamination.

The adoption of consistent, environmentally centered, evidence-based best practices to improve water quality is vital in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. The following recommendations apply to each GLLC jurisdiction, as well as coordinated across the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region.

Recommendations for GLLC Actions

- Continue to encourage the International Joint Commission to recognize microplastics as a compound of mutual concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.
- Evaluate and update these recommendations to adapt to other emerging contaminants.
- Keep members up to date on federal actions on emerging contaminants and coordinate opportunities for members to provide comment.
- Continue to track legislation related to emerging contaminants and share best practices.

Recommendations for State/Provincial Legislative Action

Response: States and provinces in the Great Lakes basin should lead on providing testing to determine levels of contamination, as well as standards for response for PFAS and plastic.

- Create and fund state/provincial programs for testing all drinking water (private and municipal), wetlands, lakes, rivers, wastewater, industrial, etc. for PFAS and microplastic contamination.
 - Programs should prioritize areas with facilities/areas known and/or suspected to cause contamination such as airports, agricultural lands, etc.
 - Testing should also prioritize waters with recreation uses to ensure safety.
- Provide grants and/or state/provincial funding/requirements for blood and other medical testing in PFAS contaminated areas, as well as water filtration.
 - Mandate insurance coverage of PFAS blood and other medical testing in PFAS-contaminated areas
 - Provide filtration options to affected areas and invest in filtration research and best practices.

- Monitor ongoing studies of the impact of plastic on human and wildlife health and set standards to prevent and address health consequences

Prevention: Wherever possible, the continued contamination of drinking water by PFAS and plastic should be prevented.

- Require labeling of products containing and/or responsible for spreading PFAS/plastic contaminants
- Manage disposal of products containing PFAS/plastics including but not limited to textiles and packaging
 - Create Extended Producer Responsibility programs to improve circularity and assess the environmental cost on the producer
 - Improve recycling accessibility for households and businesses
 - Reform bottle bill policies to improve accessibility
- Pursue non-essential use bans for products containing PFAS and single-use plastic materials
- Develop grant programs/tax incentives for industry to create alternates to PFAS and plastic products.
 - Engage academic institutions and existing accelerators to provide research support

Remediation: Return areas of known contamination safe levels in a timely manner, encouraging the use of emerging destruction technologies.

- Provide mechanisms to hold contamination sources financially accountable for clean-up and compensate those harmed
- Include standards for PFAS destruction in permits and remediation decrees.
- Create grant programs to support emerging PFAS destruction technologies.
- Encourage continued research into microplastic removal and destruction.

Approved by the Task Force on August 14, 2026

Amended and approved by the Executive Committee on September 28, 2026

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