

Last month I provided verbal testimony and written input in favor of standards for all water sources as the final public step of the rule making process.

Drinking water standards affect municipal water suppliers, like the City of La Crosse.

Surface water comes from rivers and lakes, which can be used as water resources, (ie. Peshtigo, Green Bay) which funnel water to municipal treatment facilities before being used for public drinking water.

Groundwater is what private well owners use - water pumped up from the ground.

After more than 3 hours of testimony from residents in PFAS affected communities, environmental groups, WI manufacturing and commerce lobbyists, well drillers and farmers, a tie vote among the NRB (with one abstention) failed to pass a standard for groundwater.

That means the rule making process to set a groundwater standard will have to start all over. It took us roughly 3 years to get to the point of a vote.

A standard of 70 ppt vs the 20 ppt recommended by the DNR and DHS was passed for municipal/drinking water. Separate standards for wastewater and surface water were passed to be phased in over 7 years. The legislation has gone to the Governor's office. It will also go through the State Legislature's Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR).

If this new standard for drinking/municipal water becomes law it will affect many cities like La Crosse, Eau Claire and Wausau. The 70 ppt standard is 3.5 times higher than the WDNR and WDHS recommend based upon the latest scientific evidence linking lifelong medical concerns associated with PFAS consumption in water. The NRB cited the past EPA standard for PFAS in water established six years ago.

Last year the EPA's action plan noted the 70 ppt standard is outdated and does not reflect current scientific studies. The EPA is preparing a draft standard to be released by this November, with a potential codified standard set in 2023.

I contacted the DNR and DHS after the meeting to find out if there is an impact to the water being supplied to us. It was confirmed in our intergovernmental meeting last week that the health advisory set last year is still in force. If there is a change to that advisory we will be notified, public meetings will be conducted and a new plan will be developed to provide a safe water solution until a long-term solution is implemented.

I had a second interview with the Thriving Earth Exchange and I expect an invitation for another meeting later in March with a potential start date in late April.

The team who conducted additional water testing in conjunction with the National tap water study will present some of their national findings at Viterbo on March 25th. Erin Brockovich will speak and provide a presentation the evening before. The public is invited to attend either virtually or in person, registration is required at no cost to participants.

I am working with Rep. Ron Kind and Sen. Brad Pfaff's offices to offer a community listening session in the near future.

I continue to research products, techniques and technologies which may reduce contaminants in our groundwater.