

CHRISTINE McKIERNAN, M.D. - Chair
MICHAEL ROSNER, M.D. - Vice Chair
KAREN WALSH PIO - Clerk
TONY JUDGE
STEPHEN FRANTZ

SHARON HART, Director of Public Health

NOTICE

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING
&
AGENDA**

April 8th, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Webinar from your Computer:

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NOTE: Not all the topics listed in this notice may actually be reached for discussion. In addition, the topics listed are those which the Chair reasonably expects will be discussed as of the date of this notice.

To: Board of Health Members

From: Sharon D. Hart, Director of Public Health

Re: A Board of Health Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 8th, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the South Hadley Library.

1: The Chair will announce the meeting is being recorded and by either the Board/Committee or a member of the audience.

2: Chair to Call the Meeting to Order

3: Acceptance of the Minutes of June 21, 2024 and January 28, 2025 meeting.
Acceptance of Informational discussion February 11, 2025.

4: Announcements/Open Forum (10 Minutes)

5: Director's Report

6: New Business:

(a) Nicotine-Free Generation- Belchertown Board of Health representatives

(b) Policy for Cremation of Certain Unclaimed Bodies – Sharon Hart

(c) PFAS – Stephen Frantz

- PFAS Draft Law Document
- EPA Promoting Fertilizer Full of PFAS Despite Knowing Risks
Electrochemical Treatment Destroys PFAS, Creating Clean Water
- Aclarity
- New Mexico Set to become third state to implement full PFAS
product ban

(d) An Act authorizing the Town of South Hadley to prohibit application of
second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides – Stephen Frantz

7: Old Business:

(e): Letter of Support for Phone & Social Media Free Schools in Massachusetts -
South Hadley Policy – Karen Walsh Pio

8: Set Next Meeting Date – (TBD) at 6:00 p.m. at South Hadley Public Library

9: Adjourn meeting

South Hadley
Board of Health Meeting

Date: 6-21-24

Time: 4:00 p.m.

Members: Christine McKiernan, Chair: Present, Karen Walsh Pio Present Stephen Frantz Present
Tony Judge: Absent, Sharon Hart, Director Present, Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Director,
Present, Tamara Gheit, Health Department Assistant Present

- 1. Chair to call the meeting to order @ 4:04 p.m.**
- 2. Approve quarterly payment amount for Director Hart to manage Public Health Excellence (PHE) grant**

In the May 6, 2024 meeting, the Board voted to pay Director Hart a stipend to manage the PHE grant but the minutes for that meeting did not reflect the exact amount and needed to reflect that amount.

Christine McKiernan, Chair, made a motion to amend the minutes to read: “The Board of Health members voted for Director Hart to receive a grant payment for managing the PHE Grant for as long as the grant is in place.” “Director Hart will be paid \$2,500 per quarter from the Public Health Excellence Grant. The Grant is for three years at \$509,000 each year, and assigned to three communities, one regional PHE Coordinator, two regional health inspectors, and one regional nurse have been hired.”

Karen Walsh Pio made the motion to amend the minutes to so reflect exactly as Christine McKiernan read.

Motion: Karen Walsh Pio, 2nd Stephen Frantz

All in favor: Christine McKiernan - aye

Karen Walsh Pio – aye

Stephen Frantz - aye

- 3. Meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.**

South Hadley
Board of Health Meeting

Date: 02-11-25 Time: 6:00 p.m.

Members: Dr. Christine McKiernan, Chair: Absent Dr. Michael Rosner, Vice-Chair
Present Karen Walsh Pio, Clerk Present Tony Judge Absent Stephen Frantz Absent
Sharon Hart Present Jennifer Jernigan Present

1. **Vice-Chair to call the meeting to order 6:09 p.m.**
2. **Acceptance of the meeting minutes of 01-28-25**

The meeting minutes review was tabled until the next Board meeting due to the lack of a quorum.

3. **Announcements/Open Forum (10 Minutes)-**

Ken Elstein and David Gottsegen, M.D., Board of Health members in Belchertown, talked about Nicotine Free Generation and what that is, where you pick a cut-off date and anyone born after that date, they cannot buy nicotine products. Ken would like to schedule a presentation on the topic for a future date. Director Hart asked Ken if he was aware of the bill in the House and Senate on this and he said he was. He feels a need for at least 100 municipalities to pass it anyway, beforehand. Director Hart will bring this request to Chair McKiernan as the Chair sets the agenda for the next meeting.

4. **Director's Report – Director Hart provided an update on the latest activities and initiatives.**

**Behavioral Health 360: <https://solutions.crediblemind.com/behavioral-health-360/>
Director Hart is moving forward with working with Crediblemind and IT to implement this program.**

February is Heart Health month: Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States but it can often be prevented. Information is being posted at Town Hall, Council on Aging and the South Hadley Library – in English and Spanish. The information is also available on the Town website.

Bird Flu or Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI): Guidance for responding to HPAI was received and it is on the Town website and was sent to all residents permitted. Guidance was timely as a response was necessary. MDAR and MassWildlife were notified.

Blood Drive: Our Regional Nurse is currently working with Baystate Medical Center to sponsor a blood drive in South Hadley. The Red Cross does not do blood drives anymore. You must go to their designated site only. They will not come to your site.

ADA Improvement Grant Program, Massachusetts Office of Disability (MOD): was awarded. All equipment has been received. (Bariatric cots, All Terrain Wheelchairs, Transcending Chairs). Installation and training for the Transcending Chairs will occur in March/April. Guidelines for use are being developed.

Survey created and distributed: at Lathrop Village to identify the needs of residents came back and some health related topics identified were: heart health, COPD, arthritis, depression/anxiety, eye and low vision services, and BINGO.

Viral respiratory illness (COVID, RSV, Influenza) is on the rise:
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/viral-respiratory-illness-reporting>

Fluentalk: The Health Department has purchased eight (8) Fluentalk with grant money. Fluentalk is a handheld portable translation device that can translate in real time, offline and from images and includes a two-year cellular data plan. These translation devices have been distributed to the Council on Aging, Library, Police Department, School Department, Town Hall and both Fire Districts for their ambulances. Director Hart will evaluate the device usage at the end of the two-year program to see if they should be renewed.

COVID Tests: Another pallet (5568) was received and are being distributed to the library and Council on Aging. The Health Department put together bags of COVID tests and masks and gave them to the food establishments and retail establishments during the holidays, as well as to the faith-based communities that requested them.
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-reporting>

COVID: COVID levels within Wastewater are online:
[COVID-19 Virus & Vaccination Information | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

WASTEWATER Testing: Director Hart discussed that the wastewater testing for high-risk substances was completed and there is now data for the past six months available. BIOBOT that tests our water for COVID and the High-Risk Panel, has offered to do 3 Testing Panels for each of the communities in our Regional Health District (Chicopee, Holyoke and South Hadley). This would mean a year of testing for 3 different panels for a cost of \$25,920 for South Hadley. The panels are High-Risk Substances, Substance Use Disorder and an Opioid Panel. Director Hart will share a PowerPoint for the next meeting on the results of these panels.

GRANT(s)

Public Health Excellence Grant: Director Hart stated that she still has the grant.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Grant: Five air sensors are up in South Hadley, per Director Hart, that she received from MassDEP. The other three (3) in Chicopee will be installed shortly.

<https://healthyairnetwork.org/>

[https://map.purpleair.com/air-quality-standards-us-epa-agi?opt=%2F1%2Fp604800%2FcC\)#12.99/42.20416/-72.58806](https://map.purpleair.com/air-quality-standards-us-epa-agi?opt=%2F1%2Fp604800%2FcC)#12.99/42.20416/-72.58806)

MassDOT: More messaging went up on PVRTA buses regarding tobacco recently, free of charge.

5: New Business:

a) Policy for Cremation of Certain Unclaimed Bodies – Sharon Hart

State law states that the Board of Health can regulate what is done with unclaimed bodies at funeral parlors. The Board members will read over the policy for discussion at the next Board of Health meeting.

b) Effect of federal restrictions on public health communications, information and research.

Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Director, stated that at this moment, no changes to the Health Department have occurred.

6: Old Business:

a) EPA Promoting Fertilizer Full of PFAS Despite Knowing Risks – Stephen Frantz

This topic was deferred to the next Board of Health meeting as Stephen Frantz could not attend this meeting.

b) Letter of Support for Phone and Social Media Free Schools in Mass – South Hadley Policy – Karen Walsh Pio

Karen Walsh Pio explained the intent of the letter. There are a number of places in the Pioneer Valley contemplating phone and social media free schools so that students can focus on their schoolwork. The letter just states that we are aware from a public health perspective of this issue. Because there was no quorum, no voting could take place on whether to sign the letter. This topic will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

- c) **Board of Health representative to the SH Human Rights Commission – Lori Souder**
Lori did not attend the meeting.

7. Set Next Meeting Date: March 11 at 6:00 p.m. at South Hadley Public Library

8. Board of Health meeting adjourned: 6:57 p.m.

[News Flash Home](#)

The original item was published from 11/22/2024 12:36:08 PM to 11/22/2024 2:24:56 PM.

Belchertown Updates

Posted on: November 22, 2024

[ARCHIVED] The Nicotine-Free Generation Initiative in Belchertown: A Community Effort for Public Health

Read more about the Nicotine-Free Generation initiative that is being proposed in Belchertown.

The Nicotine-Free Generation Initiative in Belchertown: A Community Effort for Public Health

The Belchertown Board of Health is proposing an evidence-based public health policy focused on reducing the use of nicotine products among our youth, building towards a healthier generation. This plan aims to curtail the sale of nicotine products to individuals born on or after January 1, 2004. By implementing this policy, Belchertown joins a growing number of communities in Massachusetts, across the nation, and around the world, in addressing nicotine addiction at its source—youth initiation.

Youth are especially vulnerable to nicotine addiction, with 95% of smokers starting before age 21 and the NFG policy seeks to disrupt this cycle. By preventing young people from even starting to use tobacco, a highly addictive substance, we are working to building a healthier future for our youth and town.

Belchertown's initiative follows the example set by nine other Massachusetts towns, and growing. The policy has also been implemented nationwide in countries such as the United Kingdom.



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The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court upheld the legality of the NFG policy earlier this year, solidifying its constitutionality and paving the way for broader adoption. Locally, the policy has garnered support from health coalitions, community groups, and youth organizations, including Belchertown's Helping Hands Youth Group.

The Rationale Behind a Nicotine-Free Generation

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, responsible for 480,000 deaths annually with over 9,000 of these deaths occurring in Massachusetts alone. Despite significant declines in smoking rates over the decades—from 42% in 1964 to less than 12% in 2022—the tobacco industry continues to innovate, targeting youth with flavored products and appealing marketing.

Understanding the Policy

The Nicotine-Free Generation concept is simple but powerful. It prohibits the sale of nicotine products, including cigarettes, vapes, and smokeless tobacco, to anyone born after January 1, 2004. Unlike traditional tobacco control measures that focus on specific age groups, NFG phases out nicotine sales over generations, effectively cutting off the pipeline of future smokers.

The policy focuses on regulating sales rather than personal behavior. This isn't about taking away rights, it is about protecting youth from addiction and its lifelong consequences. Current nicotine users retain their right to purchase these products, ensuring the policy's gradual and manageable implementation.

Economic and Social Impacts

A significant portion of money spent on tobacco products leaves the local economy. For example, if there are about 1,000 smokers in Belchertown spending an average of \$3,650 annually on cigarettes, that totals \$3.6 million per year. Redirecting even a fraction of this spending to local businesses would benefit our local businesses instead of going to Big Tobacco. Approximately 50% of the price of a pack of cigarettes is in the form of taxes, which does not remain in the community or benefit the store owner.

The average smoker consumes about 15 cigarettes per day, spending around \$10 daily or \$3,650 annually on cigarettes. With about 1,000 smokers in Belchertown, this amounts to over \$3.6 million per year.

If 100 young people avoid smoking, they would collectively save \$365,000 annually, which could be spent on positive activities at our local businesses.

Educating people about the financial benefits of quitting smoking can help many successfully quit.

The economic impact of NFG to the ten businesses in Belchertown that sell tobacco as only a part of their sales is expected to be minimal, as the gradual decline in tobacco sales allows retailers to adapt their business models. Youth who use nicotine are a small percentage of local store's customers.

Furthermore, reducing nicotine addiction could free up millions of dollars currently spent on smoking-related healthcare costs.

Addressing Concerns

Evidence suggests that restricting access to tobacco products works. In one Massachusetts town, when the the minimum tobacco purchase age was raised to from 18 to 21 in 2005, youth smoking rates declined by over 50%—a rate nearly three times higher than in neighboring towns.

NFG gradually reduces nicotine availability while maintaining access for current users. This approach avoids the creation of black markets and ensures a smooth transition.

Twice a year, compliance checks are made by the Pioneer Valley Tobacco Control Coalition in the ten stores in Belchertown to ensure that they are not selling cigarettes to anyone under 21. Unfortunately, half of them have failed these compliance checks.

Community Engagement and Education

Public education remains a cornerstone of Belchertown’s strategy in addition to this policy. Local organizations such as the Pioneer Valley Tobacco Control Coalition and the Belchertown Overcoming Adversity Together (BOAT) coalition have been instrumental in raising awareness about the dangers of nicotine and the benefits of the NFG policy.

Youth involvement has also been critical. Helping Hands, a Belchertown student-led group, has vocally supported the initiative, highlighting its potential to protect future generations. According to Helping Hands members, many of their peers are already struggling with nicotine addiction, and the policy offers hope for a healthier future for their generation.

A Look Ahead

Belchertown’s Board of Health is set to vote on the Nicotine-Free Generation policy on December 11, 2024 at a public hearing where they will take comments from the public. The agenda and link to the online meeting will be posted on the town’s website www.belchertown.org under “Agendas and Minutes”. If passed, the policy will go into effect on January 1, 2025, marking a significant milestone in the town’s public health journey. The initiative represents not only a commitment to reducing smoking-related diseases but also a vision for a healthier, more resilient community.

This initiative underscores the importance of proactive, evidence-based public health measures that prioritize the well-being of future generations over the profits of the tobacco industry. As the town moves forward, it stands as a testament to what can be achieved when communities come together to address pressing health challenges.

Other News in Belchertown Updates

Belchertown Recognizes Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month

Posted on: April 1, 2025



CHRISTINE MCKIERNAN, M.D., Chair
Michael Rosner M.D., Vice-Chair
KAREN WALSH PIO, LICSW, LADC-1, Clerk
STEPHEN FRANTZ
TONY JUDGE

SHARON HART, Director of Public Health

February 11, 2025

**TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
POLICY FOR CREMATION OF CERTAIN UNCLAIMED BODIES**

On July 31, 2018 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts adopted the Acts of 2018 c. 203, an Act Relative to the Cremation of Certain Unclaimed Bodies (effective July 1, 2018), which states in part “a board of health may serve as the duly authorized representative for the purpose of requesting cremation of unclaimed body remains by signing a cremation form under the following circumstances: (i) the unclaimed remains shall be in a location that is within the jurisdiction of the board of health, (ii) the board of health has received notice from a licensed funeral director that either no person has come forward to claim the remains or that no person may legally claim the remains provided, however, that the board of health shall wait 30 days after such notification under this clause prior to signing the cremation form. The unclaimed remains shall then be viewed by a medical examiner or forensic investigator designated by the chief medical officer pursuant to section 14 of Chapter 38, who shall authorize cremation only when no further examination or judicial inquiry concerning the death is necessary. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner may waive the fee set forth in said section 14 of Chapter 38 for cremation authorizations pursuant to this section. There shall be no liability for a board of health or an employee, agent, or licensee thereof that authorizes the disposal of unclaimed remains in accordance with this section.”

On February 11, 2025, the South Hadley Board of Health voted to authorize the Director of Public Health or the Assistant Director of Public Health as its designee(s) to act in accordance with section 43M of Chapter 114 of the Massachusetts General Laws. This vote allows the Director of Public Health or the Assistant Director of Public Health to sign a cremation form under certain circumstances as specifically set forth in said statute.

To provide notice in accordance with the statute, a licensed funeral director may fully complete and submit a Cremation Form to the Director of Public Health. A Cremation Form can be obtained by contacting the South Hadley Public Health Department (413)538-5030 x 6184. After receiving notice, the Director of Public Health or Assistant Director of Public Health is required to wait thirty (30) days prior to signing the form. The Director of Public Health or Assistant Director of Public Health will notify the funeral director after the form to authorize cremation has been signed. The funeral director may then obtain a signed copy of the form.

Part I ADMINISTRATION OF THE
GOVERNMENT

Title PUBLIC HEALTH

XVI

Chapter CEMETERIES AND BURIALS

114

Section PERMANENT DISPOSITION OF
DEAD BODIES OR REMAINS

43M

Section 43M. Except as otherwise provided by law, or in case of a dead body being rightfully carried through or removed from the commonwealth for the purpose of burial or disposition elsewhere, every dead body of a human being dying within the commonwealth, and the remains of any body after dissection therein, shall be decently buried, entombed in a mausoleum, vault or tomb or cremated within a reasonable time after death. The permanent disposition of such bodies or remains shall be by interment in the earth or deposit in a chamber, vault or tomb of a cemetery owned, maintained and operated in accordance with the laws of this commonwealth, by deposit in a crypt of a mausoleum, or by cremation.

The remains of a human body after cremation may be deposited in a niche of a columbarium or a crypt of a mausoleum, buried or disposed of in any manner not contrary to law. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, a funeral establishment in possession of the cremated remains

within the jurisdiction of the board of health; (11) the board of health has received notice from a licensed funeral director that either no person has come forward to claim the remains or that no person may legally claim the remains; provided, however, that the board of health shall wait 30 days after such notification under this clause prior to signing the cremation form. The unclaimed remains shall then be viewed by a medical examiner or forensic investigator designated by the chief medical examiner pursuant to section 14 of chapter 38, who shall authorize such cremation only when no further examination or judicial inquiry concerning the death is necessary. The office of the chief medical examiner may waive the fee set forth in said section 14 of said chapter 38 for cremation authorizations pursuant to this section. There shall be no liability for a board of health or an employee, agent, or licensee thereof that authorizes the disposal of unclaimed remains in accordance with this section. Nothing in this section shall supersede the obligations of the office of the chief medical examiner as set forth in this chapter and chapter 38.

Part I ADMINISTRATION OF THE
GOVERNMENT

Title VI COUNTIES AND COUNTY
OFFICERS

Chapter MEDICAL EXAMINERS AND
38 INQUESTS

Section BODIES INTENDED FOR
14 CREMATION OR BURIAL AT SEA;
AUTHORIZATION; FEES

Section 14. A medical examiner or forensic investigator designated by the chief medical examiner shall, on payment of a fee as determined from time to time by the secretary of public safety, which shall be not less than \$75, view the body and make personal inquiry concerning the cause and manner of death of any person whose body is intended for cremation or burial at sea and shall authorize such cremation or burial at sea only when no further examination or judicial inquiry concerning such death is necessary. Said fee shall be paid by the person to whom such authorization for cremation or burial at sea is given. Cremation fees collected by the office of the chief medical examiner shall be utilized to support the comprehensive system of medico-legal investigative services delivered by the agency. District medical examiners employed on a fee-for-service basis shall be compensated for performance of cremation views at a rate

Acts (2018)

Chapter 203

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE CREMATION OF CERTAIN UNCLAIMED BODIES.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is to provide forthwith for the cremation of certain unclaimed bodies, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 43M of chapter 114 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2016 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph:-

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary and for the purposes of this section, a board of health may serve as the duly authorized representative for the purpose of requesting cremation of unclaimed remains by signing a cremation form under the following circumstances: (i) the unclaimed remains shall be in a location that is within the jurisdiction of the board of health; (ii) the board of health has received notice from a licensed funeral director that either no person has come forward to claim the remains or that no person may legally claim the remains; provided, however, that the board of health

An Act Regulating the Sale and Application of PFAS-Contaminated Biosolids Fertilizer in the Town of South Hadley, MA.

SECTION 1: Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been manufactured and used by a broad range of industries since the 1940s, and there are estimated to be thousands of PFAS that are used in many consumer, commercial and industrial products. Scientists have been raising growing concerns for decades over the use of toxic “forever chemicals,” so called because their strong molecular bonds can take hundreds of years to completely break down in the environment. These substances are turning up everywhere from drinking water to our bloodstream.

Biosolids are the nutrient-rich semi-solid materials resulting from treated, domestic sewage sludge; basically, the product from a wastewater treatment plant. Farmers and gardeners have been recycling biosolids for ages, reducing the need for synthetic chemical fertilizers. In theory, after treatment and processing to remove hazardous materials and pathogens, these residuals (biosolids) can be recycled and applied as fertilizer to improve and maintain productive soils and stimulate plant growth.

SECTION 2: Now, in a draft risk assessment (Jan. 15, 2025), the EPA warns that two forms of perfluoroalkyl substances, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), can harm human health when found in biosolids at concentrations as low as 1 part per billion (1 ppb) after the material has been disposed of or used as fertilizer. Such materials can contribute to an increased risk of certain cancers, along with other health issues.

SECTION 3: The agency determined the chemicals could leach from the material, whether it's land applied, disposed of in a landfill or incinerated. The assessment found that "there can be human health risks exceeding EPA's acceptable thresholds, sometimes by several orders of magnitude," from living near sites that have land applied PFAS-contaminated biosolids or from using groundwater or products (e.g., food crops, animal products or drinking water) impacted by such a site. This acknowledgment comes after years of concern from farmers and state

regulators, who have been raising alarms about land application despite its reputation as an effective means of organics recycling. Sadly, the EPA has known about PFAS in sewage sludge for well over a decade.

SECTION 4: While [PFOA and PFOS](#) were phased out of production years ago, they remain persistent in the environment. PFAS contamination can persist, impacting sites where biosolids were applied long after the practice was halted. For instance, a Maine organic farm was found to be contaminated — despite land application not being allowed for farms to achieve organic certification — because the site's prior owner had spread contaminated biosolids. While federal regulators have yet to set enforceable limits on PFAS in biosolids, state lawmakers and regulatory agencies are initiating various actions on their own, including Maine, New Hampshire, Texas, Oklahoma, Washington, Michigan and Maryland.

SECTION 5: In light of the bureaucratic uncertainties and public health risks of PFAS-contaminated biosolids to consumers (homeowners, gardeners, farmers, etc.), be it resolved that PFAS-contaminated biosolids fertilizers shall no longer be sold or applied within the borders of the Town of South Hadley, MA. It would be most beneficial if this regulation were applied state-wide.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon passage.

EPA Promoting Fertilizer Full of PFAS Despite Knowing Risks

New reporting shows the EPA was warned over 20 years ago that sewage sludge contained high levels of so-called "forever chemicals."

By BRETT WILKINS · Dec 27, 2024



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continues to promote a commonly used commercial fertilizer despite being informed over 20 years ago that its key component contained high levels of so-called "forever chemicals," a *New York Times* investigation revealed Friday.

The *Times*' Hiroko Tabuchi reviewed thousands of pages of decades-old documents and found that scientists at chemical giant 3M discovered high levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in U.S. sewage during the early

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"The EPA continues to promote sewage sludge as fertilizer and doesn't require testing for PFAS."

However, as Tabuchi noted, "the EPA continues to promote sewage sludge as fertilizer and doesn't require testing for PFAS, despite the fact that whistleblowers, academics, state officials, and the agency's internal studies over the years have also raised contamination concerns."

According to the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, PFAS are linked to cancers of the kidneys and testicles, low infant weight, suppressed immune function, and other adverse health effects. They are found in the blood of around 99% of people around the world. EPA data show there's PFAS in the drinking water of tens of millions of Americans.

According to Tabuchi, EPA experts raised concerns about PFAS as far back as the 1990s, but their warnings went unheeded.

The *Times* investigation follows reporting earlier this month led by *Prism's* Rebecca Barglowski showing that EPA and state officials in New Jersey have known about PFAS-contaminated water for nearly two decades.

Tabuchi noted that "the country is starting to wake up to the consequences" of PFAS' ubiquity. However, only one state—Maine—has begun systematically testing farms for PFAS. It has also banned the use of sewage sludge to fertilize

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Trump will roll back Biden-era regulations, disempower agency specialists, and let political appointees make crucial regulatory decisions.

Even under Biden, the EPA is arguing that it cannot be sued for taking inadequate action to protect the public from PFAS contamination.

In June, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) sued the EPA on behalf of a group of farmers, ranchers, and green groups "for failing to perform its nondiscretionary duty to identify and regulate toxic pollutants in sewage sludge" used as fertilizer. In September, the EPA moved to dismiss the lawsuit, arguing that it has complete discretion regarding the identification and listing of pollutants.

"EPA seems to have lost any sense of its legal and moral obligation to protect public health," attorney and former EPA scientist Kyla Bennett said at the time. "Under the plain language of the Clean Water Act, EPA has a mandatory duty to identify and regulate substances that are a threat to human health and the environment—not just to issue a report about it."

On January 20th, it begins...

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Political revenge. Mass deportations. Project 2025. Unfathomable corruption. Attacks on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Pardons for insurrectionists. An all-out assault on democracy.

Republicans in Congress are scrambling to give Trump broad new powers to strip the tax-exempt status of any nonprofit he doesn't like by declaring it a "terrorist-supporting organization." Trump has already begun filing lawsuits against news outlets that criticize him. At Common Dreams, we won't back down, but we must get ready for whatever Trump and his thugs throw at us.


Our Year-End campaign is our most important fundraiser of the year. As a people-powered nonprofit news outlet, we cover issues the corporate media never will, but we can only continue with

Paul M. donated \$27.20

 Melbourne, Australia

6 hours ago

Czikus C. donated €16.30

 Amsterdam, The Netherlands

7 hours ago

Hans L. donated \$8.80

 Stockholm, Sweden

9 hours ago

Walter B. donated \$5.50

9 hours ago

Marni H. donated \$4.60

 Lansing, United States

"I've been following you and advocating for you for years, but unable to give. I've just been approved for SSI and I want to share it with you, but I can't afford very much. Things are so very bad in the world right now and we need you to keep up the good work you

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Better World Project

Electrochemical Treatment Destroys PFAS, Creating Clean Water

University of Massachusetts Amherst



In a world where clean water is becoming increasingly scarce, a silent threat lurks in rivers, lakes, and even our drinking water. “Forever chemicals”, the substances that don’t break down in the environment, threaten the world’s water supplies. Also known as PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, they are found in everything from non-stick cookware to firefighting foam. PFAS have infiltrated our

ecosystems and our bodies, posing serious health risks, including cancer, decreased fertility, reduced vaccine response, high cholesterol, and developmental delays in children.



Enter scientists from the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst), past PhD Candidate Julie Bliss Mullen and Emeritus Professor David Reckhow, who in 2016 developed an electrochemical water treatment technology which breaks the strong carbon-fluorine bonds that make PFAS so persistent. Their PFAS destruction product, today known as Octa™ System, destroys PFAS contaminants on site, forever.

"The technology backbone is electrochemical advanced oxidation," Mullen explained. "We process PFAS contaminated waters through a bank of electrified reactors and destroy PFAS for industrial clients, destroying PFAS 'forever chemicals' forever."

Mullen and Reckhow years back knew they had revolutionary technology on their hands and looked to the UMass Amherst IALS Venture Development program and the UMass Technology Transfer Office for guidance. With the TTO's help, Mullen founded the startup, Aclarity, in 2017 which is revolutionizing water treatment by destroying dangerous contaminants like PFAS at an industrial scale. The Octa System's innovative low-energy electrochemical process doesn't just remove PFAS; it destroys them, ensuring they can't harm our environment or our health.

By partnering with treatment facilities, manufacturers, and landfills, Aclarity is tackling some of the most challenging water contamination issues. "Aclarity's Octa is their full-scale permanent PFAS destruction product, which stems directly from Mullen and Reckhow's research on campus. We're proud to see their lab concept fully commercialized, making a positive impact for future generations," says Burnley Jaklevic, UMass Amherst's Director, Technology Transfer Office.

Aclarity has garnered significant support and recognition, having raised \$20M in Venture Capital funding and securing millions from state and federal funding. In 2024, Aclarity was recognized by TIME Magazine's top 100 GreenTech companies globally and Norrsken top 100 most promising impact startups that will change the world.

This story was originally published in 2024.

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Our Mission: Destroy PFAS Forever



Aclarity's proprietary technology and commercialized solution break the current PFAS cycle. Until now, the current way to "remediate" PFAS has been a dangerous cycle of removal and disposal, either by putting the PFAS back into landfills after removal or by burning the removed PFAS and releasing toxic aerosols into the air. Aclarity's technology utilizes electricity to break the carbon and fluorine bonds that make PFAS compounds so robust.

Our Team

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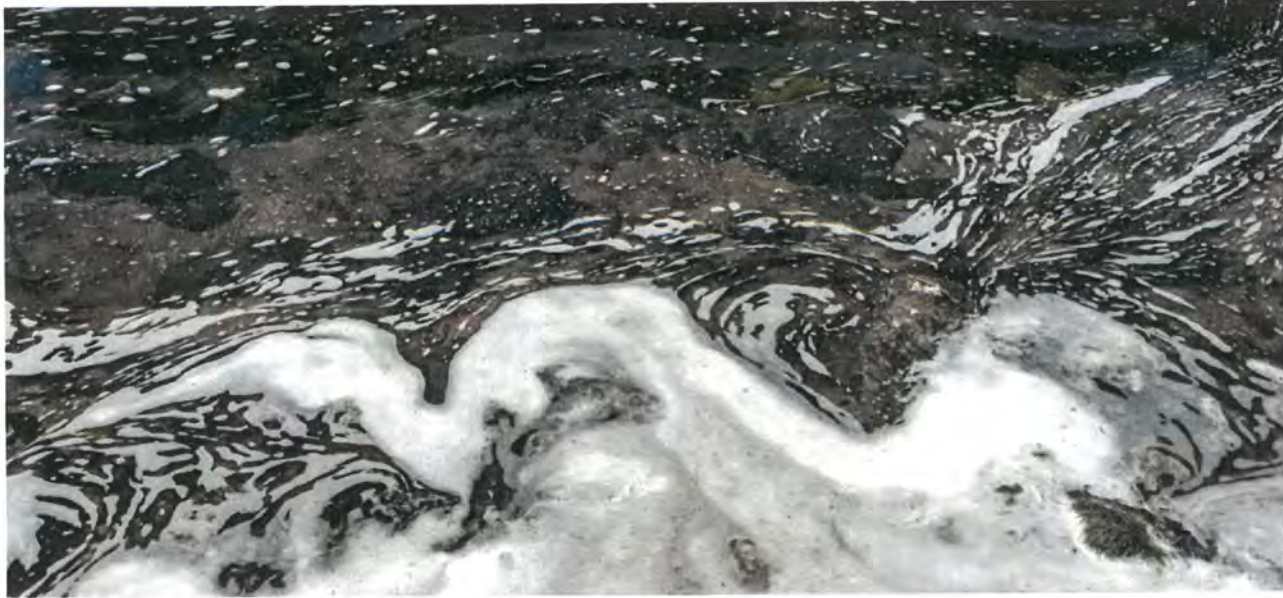
CORY BOOKER

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

New Mexico set to become third state to implement full PFAS product ban

BY SHARON UDASIN - 03/27/25 2:59 PM ET





Jake May, The Flint Journal via Associated Press

PFAS foam gathers at the the Van Etten Creek dam in Oscoda Township, Mich.

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New Mexico is poised to become the third state to institute a full-fledged ban on products that contain toxic “forever chemicals,” as two key bills head to the governor’s desk.

The concurrent pieces of legislation, which have both passed through the state Legislature, would prohibit most items that contain these compounds, while also deeming specific types of discarded firefighting foam as hazardous waste.

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The chemicals in question, called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), are notorious for their propensity to linger in the human body and in the environment. Linked to various types of cancers and other serious illnesses, PFAS are found in numerous household products, as well as in certain kinds of firefighting foam.

The first bill, [H.B. 212](#), would ban products that contain intentionally added PFAS and would authorize the state's Environmental Improvement Board to adopt relevant rules.

Starting on Jan. 1, 2027, manufacturers would not be able to sell or distribute cookware, food packaging, dental floss and juvenile products that have intentionally added PFAS. The same would apply to carpets, cleaning fluids, cosmetics, fabric treatments, menstrual products, textiles, ski wax and upholstered furniture on Jan. 1, 2028.

With respect to pesticides, fertilizers and other agricultural materials — many of which contain PFAS — the Environmental Improvement Board would consult with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture before setting rules on these subjects.

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There would be some exceptions to the prospective ban, such as those items that the board has determined “to be essential for health, safety or the functioning of society and for which alternatives are not reasonably available.”

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The accompanying piece of legislation, [H.B. 140](#), focuses on a range of chemicals, including PFAS, and provides new clarity on the meaning of the term “hazardous waste.”

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The bill would redefine hazardous waste as “any solid waste or combination of solid wastes” that because of its amount, concentration or characteristics could “cause or significantly 

If Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D) signs the two bills as anticipated, New Mexico would become the third state to implement a near-complete prohibition on PFAS-containing products.

CONTENT CONTINUES BELOW SURVEY

The state would follow in the footsteps of Maine and Minnesota, which passed their respective laws in 2021 and 2023. Numerous other states have approved legislation forbidding PFAS in certain product categories, rather than instituting bans across the board.

While the three-year price of preventing PFAS pollution via such a ban would climb to about \$2.8 million, the cost of removing and destroying just one pound of PFAS from water could be up to \$18 million, according to an analysis of the legislation from the New Mexico Environment Department.

“With approximately 1,100 public drinking water systems in New Mexico serving 94 percent of our residents, preventing contamination is the only affordable means of securing our drinking water supply,” the analysis concluded.

TAGS

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An Act authorizing the town of South Hadley to prohibit the application of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides within its borders.

By Dr. Frantz, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. — of Dr. Stephen Frantz (with approval of the Town Administrator and Select Board) for legislation to authorize the Town of South Hadley to prohibit the application of second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs) within its borders. Environment and Natural Resources. [Local Approval _____.]

SECTION 1. Second generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs, including brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difenacoum, and difethialone) can have harmful ecosystem-wide effects where they are applied. SGARs are capable of producing rodent kill after a single feeding; in practice however, rodents are able to feed repeatedly and can accumulate more than a lethal dose. In addition, these products have a long biological half-life and may remain in a dead rodent's body at toxic levels for many months. Thus, when dead rodents are consumed by a raptor (owls, Bald Eagles, Red-Tailed Hawks, etc.); predator (Bobcats, Mountain Lions, Foxes, etc.); or household pets (dogs, cats, etc.) a lethal dose can be ingested. Not only are these deaths destructive to natural ecosystems, but also lost are the valuable rodent control services that these wildlife species provide (removing rodents naturally).

SECTION 2. These concerns are particularly important in most rodent control efforts, public or professional, where the poison applicators may not be thoroughly trained and where monitoring may be incomplete and/or infrequent. And, we must always consider the possibility of human error in handling, applying, and disposing of toxicants.

SECTION 3. Antidotal and associated therapies *are not* a probable outcome for secondarily poisoned non-target wildlife. SGARs must be applied in a manner that renders them directly unavailable to non-target wildlife (and pet species); and a poison's biological half-life must be short enough so that a hyper-lethal dose is not likely. Since these constraints are

unrealistic in principle and practice, and since non-target wildlife (and pets) are valuable environmental resources, SGARs should be prohibited from application by anyone within the Town limits of South Hadley.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

Necropsies of Anticoagulant Cases



Letter of Support for Phone & Social Media Free Schools in Massachusetts

This effort is being led by the Massachusetts Coalition for Phone and Social Media Free Schools which includes the following organizations: [Becca Schmill Foundation](#), [Smartphone Free Childhood US Parent Collective](#), [APPstinent](#), [Turning Life On](#), [Arlington Parents – Smartphone Sense](#), and [Sudbury for Digital Balance](#), as well as concerned parents, community members, educators, and public health professionals.

For FAQs, please see our [Briefing Document](#).

THE LETTER

Dear Massachusetts Legislators,

We, the undersigned parents, teachers, students, and community members, support the introduction of legislation to ensure that every student in Massachusetts has access to the benefits of a school environment that is free from personal electronic devices and social media, and prioritizes student [academic learning](#), [focus](#), [social development](#), and [emotional well-being](#).

The U.S. is experiencing a mental health crisis. The causes may be multifaceted, but the weight of the evidence clearly shows **a significant relationship with exposure to social media and other digital and online products**. U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy has said that children need device-free spaces – including schools – and has called on Congress to require warning labels on social media. Dr. Murthy says that, “the risk of not acting could be someone’s life.” <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/jn-learning/video-player/18901909>

Extensive research has made it abundantly clear that bell-to-bell personal device-free policies [improve school environments](#) by [increasing academic engagement](#), [improving learning outcomes](#), and [student’s social connection](#). Devices, including but not limited to cellular phones, tablets, smartwatches, [other wearables](#), and gaming devices, distract from learning and interrupt opportunities for students to engage in face to face interaction with each other.

Social media platforms are also a source of distraction and increased opportunities for cyberbullying. In May 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy stated that social media platforms [have not been determined to be sufficiently safe](#) for use by children and adolescents.

For the reasons stated above, we support the implementation of the following:

1. Personal electronic device-free schools, from “first bell to last bell,” where devices are turned off, securely locked away, and inaccessible to students during school hours and while students are being supervised by district staff.

2. Prohibition of integrating social media platforms into student education (with exceptions for medical needs and IEP plans), and communications for school-to-student, or after-school programs run by the school district. This does *not* prevent a school from using social media for non-student community communication and school to parent/guardian communication.

Thank you for considering this legislation.

gmaende@southhadley.ma.gov Switch account



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* Indicates required question

First Name: *

Your answer

Last Name: *

Your answer

Email: (will not displayed or shared) *

Your answer

Town where you reside: *

Your answer



Role that most closely describes your interest in this topic: *

Choose

Are you signing this letter as an individual, an organization, or both? *

- Individual
- Organization (clicking here is confirmation of your authority to endorse on behalf of your organization)
- Both

Your Organization Name: (if applicable)

Your answer

Your Title or Profession: (if applicable)

Your answer

If your school or district currently has a bell-to-bell smartphone free policy, would you be willing to write a short testimonial or take a call so we can collect feedback? *

- Not applicable
- Yes, I would be willing to provide a testimonial based on personal or professional experience
- No, not interested at this time



Are you interested in helping the Coalition advocate for Phone and Social Media Free Schools?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

By submitting this form, you agree to allow your name and/or your organization name to be included in a list of supporters of Phone and Social Media Free Schools on materials used by the members of the MA Phone and Social Media Free Schools Coalition for purposes of advocating for this specific cause.

Submit

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