

Durbin: We Must Protect Communities From “Forever Chemicals” Contamination

August 4 2021 9:28 AM



WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today spoke on the Senate floor about a recent [story](#) in the *Chicago Sun-Times* that revealed the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) – also known as “forever chemicals” – in water systems in Chicago, Lake Forest, Waukegan, and South Elgin.

Durbin called on the Senate to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, which includes \$10 billion to address PFAS and other emerging contaminants in drinking water and wastewater, with \$4 billion specifically for addressing PFAS in drinking water.

“Forever chemicals. It’s a phrase that sounds both ambiguous and ominous,” Durbin said. “The Environmental Working Group has identified more than 1,700 potential sources in my state, from sewage treatment facilities to landfills. The culprit could be anyone or a combination. As of now there is no definitive answer. In other words, the analogy is an arsonist still running through the forest, and the only signs are the trees he leaves burning.”

Durbin continued, “When it comes to protecting our children's health and well-being, solutions cannot wait and states like Illinois cannot address this threat on their own. Pending before the United States Senate at this moment is the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal. This deal is good for us, good for America, and starts to address this problem. This historic bipartisan plan will make our nation's largest ever investment in clean water. That investment includes \$10 billion for addressing the ‘forever chemical’ challenge and other emerging contaminants from drinking water and wastewater systems throughout America. That's a big deal.”

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to re-build our nation’s roads, railways, transit, and bridges; to make high-speed internet and clean water a reality for every household in America; and to create millions of good-paying, family-supporting union jobs across the country. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal is currently being debated on the Senate floor.

Video of Durbin’s floor speech is available [here](#).

The \$10 billion in PFAS funding includes:

- \$4 billion to address PFAS in drinking water through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund;
- \$5 billion for small and disadvantaged communities to address emerging contaminants, including PFAS and;
- \$1 billion to address emerging contaminants, including PFAS, in wastewater through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.