Perfluorinated Compounds (PFC' s) in Region 4

In May 2016, EPA's Office of Water issued a final drinking water health advisory for two types of PFASs (PFOA and PFOS). Region 4 had drinking water facilities in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina affected by the PFOA/ PFOS health advisory. These include facilities with both groundwater and surface water sources. The Region worked with the states in advance of and after issuance of the health advisory to determine solutions. These included notifying sensitive populations, taking wells off line when necessary, blending of water from different sources, and, in some instances, changing water source. It is suspected that most of the PFC contamination in Region 4 stems from the carpet and textile industry, chemical manufacturers, and use of fire-fighting foams at airports and fire training facilities.

Most recently, Region 4 is coordinating with EPA ORD, OSCPP and OW to assist North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Health in addressing the identification of a newly discovered unregulated contaminant, GenX, in the Cape Fear River Basin. ORD has analyzed sample splits to measure the concentration of GenX in multiple sampling locations including the Chemours facility outfall, nearby groundwater wells and downstream drinking water plants and to identify other PFAS analytes found in the ORD study which identified the presence of GenX. The Science and Ecosystem Support lab in Athens, Georgia has geared up to provide production analytical assistance to NC and other entities and has agreed to assist them with their sampling plan for future efforts. OSCPP and OW provided information and assistance to NC DOH in the development of their public health goal for GenX. Region 4, along with an OECA contractor, conducted a TSCA inspection of the Chemours facility and Region 4 NPDES staff accompanied NC DEQ staff on a site visit in order to collect information to include in the new NPDES permit that will be issued to the facility by NC. Region 4 also arranged a conference call with ORD for NC and other interested states and regions regarding treatment technologies for GenX and other PFAS.

Next Steps: Region 4 continues to work with several states and public water systems dealing with PFCs in their drinking water, including the Gen X issues in NC. State efforts include continued monitoring of drinking water and source water along with PFC source identification. The Water Protection Division is also working with Alabama and Georgia on a cross-state issue where sources in Georgia may possibly be affecting communities in Alabama. The Region applied for ORD funding for a study to assist these states, but was denied. The Region plans to work with GA and AL to complete an abbreviated study with SESD in FY 2018.

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