

Environmental Health Division



# PFAS and Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium-6)

Water Advisory Commission Meeting

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# What are PFAS?

- Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- Group of chemicals found in consumer products such as nonstick pans and waterproof clothing
- Also known as “forever chemicals”, they take a long time to degrade and disappear from the environment
- Exposure to PFAS over long periods of time may increase the risk of cancer and other health effects such as increased cholesterol and, high blood pressure. Research into the effects of PFAS exposure is ongoing.



Image: Rubber News



Image: Teledyne Technologies

# Where is PFAS contamination found?

- Landfills/garbage disposal sites
- Industrial facilities
- Wastewater treatment plants
- Fire department training sites
  - Airports
  - Military bases



Buena Vista Landfill

Photo: The Pajaronian

# What is required?

- Nation-wide (US EPA)
  - Water systems must sample for PFAS starting in 2027
  - If PFAS are found, systems must treat water to remove PFAS or stop using contaminated sources by 2029
- California
  - Sent monitoring orders to selected water systems near possible contamination sources, including the Buena Vista Landfill and the Ben Lomond Transfer Station
  - These systems must take samples and notify residents if PFAS are found
  - PFAS treatment and removal is not yet required



Photo: US EPA

# Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium-6)

- Chromium is a heavy metal that can be found in nature and is used for steel production, metal plating, and preventing corrosion, among other applications
- Total chromium is composed of trivalent chromium and hexavalent chromium
- Chromium-3 is an essential nutrient, Chromium-6 is a carcinogen
- Chromium-6 is naturally occurring in Aromas Red Sands aquifer (portions of South County)



Image: Los Cerritos News

# Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium-6)

- California MCL of 10 parts per billion (micrograms per liter) first established in 2014, invalidated in 2017
- MCL adopted in April 2024 at same level, went into effect October 1, 2024
- Initial sampling required within 6 months of effective date- by April 1, 2025
- Systems in exceedance of MCL required to submit Compliance Plan



Image: Los Cerritos News

# Hexavalent Chromium (Chromium-6)

- October 1, 2028 compliance deadline for small water systems (less than 1,000 service connections)
- Public notification required for systems in exceedance of MCL, although system is not considered out of compliance
- 10 small water systems in Santa Cruz County in exceedance of MCL (Aptos/Watsonville)



Image: Los Cerritos News



**Thank You!**