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Groundwater Contaminant Regulation in California: State Water Board Lowers Notification Levels and Announces First Step Towards Developing an MCL for Certain Compounds.

In June of 2018, the California State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Division of Drinking Water (DDW) provided [recommendations for PFOA and PFOS notification levels](#). On July 13, 2018, the State Water Board [released guidelines](#) based on DDW's recommendations for testing and reporting on two PFAS compounds—PFOA and PFOS. The interim notification level for PFOA was 14 parts per trillion (ppt) and 13 ppt for PFOS. Notification levels are non-regulatory health-based advisory levels established by the DDW for chemicals in drinking water that lack an enforceable regulatory standard called a maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). In addition to setting interim notification levels for PFOA and PFOS, the State Water Board also included an interim response level of 70 ppt combined for PFOS and PFOA whereby if the combined level is exceeded, the State recommended the water system remove the source from service. These guidelines did not require public water systems to test for PFOA and PFOS, but did require water systems voluntarily opting to test to report if the notification levels were exceeded.

On July 31, 2019, AB 756 passed as the California Legislature's first PFAS-related action. AB 756 adds Section 116378 to the California Health and Safety Code and authorizes the State Water Board to order a public water system to monitor for PFAS in accordance with conditions set by the State Water Board. [Practical detection limitations currently reduce the scope of the law to 14-18 compounds](#). The effect of the legislation is that the State Water Board can now require public water systems to test for PFAS.

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By Jonathan King on October 4, 2019

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