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New Forever Chemical Rules Could Escalate Water Bills, US Cities Warn.

With the EPA's first-ever regulation of PFAS chemicals in the water supply expected soon, local officials say they need more funding to comply.

Hastings, Minnesota, is staring down a $69 million price tag for three new treatment plants to remove PFAS chemicals from its water supply, ahead of new US federal regulations limiting the amount of so-called forever chemicals in public drinking water — which could come as early as this month.

For a town of less than 22,000 people with an operation and maintenance budget of $3 million a year for its water system, the project amounts to a "budget buster," says city administrator Dan Wietecha. Operation and maintenance costs for the new plants could add as much as $1 million to the tab each year.

The costs will likely be passed down to the public, unless the city can obtain funding through other means. "Water rates would essentially double in three years, triple in five years, and continue increasing," Wietecha says. "So, yeah, we need outside funding. This is just an unrealistic burden to put on our residents and businesses."

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By Linda Poon

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