Protecting Drinking Water from Emerging Contaminants

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Defining Emerging Contaminants

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- Three key aspects:
  - Known or likely to occur in drinking water
  - May cause harmful health effects
  - Unregulated
- Industrial chemicals, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, radioactive material, etc.
- Most emerging contaminants are never regulated in drinking water

Contaminants (21)	
1,2,3-trichloropropane	strontium
bromomethane	total chromium
chloromethane	hexavalent chromium
bromochloromethane	chlorate
chlorodifluoromethane	perfluorooctanesulfonic acid
1,3-butadiene	perfluorooctanoic acid
1,1-dichloroethane	perfluorobutanesulfonic acid
1,4-dioxane	perfluorohexanesulfonic acid
vanadium	perfluoroheptanoic acid
molybdenum	perfluorononanoic acid
cobalt	

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

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- Family of over 9,000 chemicals – AKA “forever chemicals”
- Persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic
- Used in manufacturing and wide range of consumer products
- 29 PFAS can currently be detected in drinking water using EPA-approved methods

History of PFAS Drinking Water Regulation in NYS

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- 2015-2016: Water crises in Newburgh, elsewhere
- 2017: Establishment of Drinking Water Quality Council, Emerging Contaminant Monitoring Act
- 2020: Adoption of Maximum Contaminant Levels for PFOA, PFOS, 1,4-dioxane
- 2022: Enactment of legislation to establish 23 PFAS as emerging contaminants
- 2023: US EPA proposes

Next Steps to Address PFAS in Water

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- Establish stronger PFAS drinking water standards, building on US EPA's proposal
- Stop the discharge of PFAS into our lakes, rivers, and groundwater
  - March 2023: NYS DEC finalizes Guidance Values for PFOA, PFOS, and 1,4-dioxane
  - PFAS Discharge Disclosure Act