



## Press Statement

November 19, 2021

Immediate Release

***The PFAS problem, the ‘Forever Chemicals’, is not on the public radar in Canada. But it should be. Research shows it’s raining ‘forever chemicals’ around the Great Lakes. And it’s not just the Great Lakes being impacted – it’s now a Canadian problem.***

Most Canadians have no idea they probably have PFAS chemicals (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) in their bodies, nor understand how they got exposed. Yet PFAS is found in many common consumer products such as stain repellent coatings on furniture and carpets, non stick cookware, cosmetics, food take-out containers and food packaging – to name a few. Canadian airports and military bases have been using PFAS firefighting foams for years – yet communities living nearby have no idea if their drinking water is contaminated or if airports and bases are switching to safer alternatives. Similarly communities living near waste dumps, waste water treatment plants or industries using PFAS have no idea they are at risk from PFAS contamination. The body of studies is growing associating health effects to PFAS include increased risk to various cancers, decrease risk to female fertility, increase risk to thyroid diseases, decrease the body’s response to vaccines and increase risk of high blood pressure and reproduction. All in all we have a big transparency problem in Canada. Thanks to the CBC, the first map of hotspots was revealed over a year ago. This [Resource Guide](#) now helps communities to take action and hold regulators responsible.

Additional resources on PFAS: <https://cela.ca/pfas-the-forever-chemicals/>

### **Statements:**

“North Bay is one of the communities that has been really hit with PFAS contamination, but getting the federal government to disclose their actual monitoring results has been a challenge,” said **Brennain Lloyd**, a North Bay resident and project coordinator with the northeastern Ontario coalition Northwatch. “It’s now several years since the contamination was identified, and residents have been given very little information and have been excluded from discussions between the City and the Department of National Defence about what the steps are to developing a remediation plan, or if remediation is even possible. Communities need to get ahead of the curve and inform themselves – particularly if they live near airports or bases. This resource guide will help them do that.” she added.

“The fact that it’s now raining ‘Forever Chemicals’ around the Great Lakes is a wakeup call. This area contains 20% of the world’s fresh surface water and is home to half the population of Canada. Canadians need to get active to stop more contamination,” said **John Jackson**, Canadian Co-chair for the Toxics-Free Great Lakes Binational Network. “This Resource Guide tells us how.”

“The Canadian Environmental Law Association is particularly concerned about PFAS contamination in Canada because we believe the public have a right to know about why these hazardous chemicals are found in us and if we live near PFAS contamination sites,” added **Fe de Leon**, Researcher and Paralegal at the Canadian Environmental Law Association. “This resource guide is the latest tool in our toolbox of PFAS resources to help groups and citizens take local action and hold regulators accountable,” she added.

“I have often wondered why we have so little public awareness about our use of these toxic chemicals in Canada,” said **Bev Thorpe**, specialist in international chemicals policy. “Either we simply believe the government is looking after us or we don’t ask for the same access to information as our neighbours to the south demand. If only a handful of communities use this new resource guide to ask questions, it might crack open the transparency block I believe we have in Canada,” she added. (read [blog](#) by Bev Thorpe)

“The main exposure to PFAS for infants, toddlers, and children is hand-to-mouth contact with consumer products, such as carpets, clothing, and upholstery,” said **Olga Speranskaya**, Co-Director at Health and Environment Justice Support. “Food packaging for the foods that kids love the most, like pizza boxes or popcorn bags, is usually covered with PFAS. But how can parents avoid these products if there are no labeling requirements? We really need stronger access to information in Canada and binding disclosure of PFAS chemicals in consumer products.”

**To arrange an interview, contact:**

Brennain Lloyd, **Northwatch**, [brennain@northwatch.org](mailto:brennain@northwatch.org)

John Jackson, **Toxics-Free Great Lakes Binational Network**, [jjackson@web.ca](mailto:jjackson@web.ca)

Fe de Leon, **Canadian Environmental Law Association**, [deleonf@cela.ca](mailto:deleonf@cela.ca)

Beverley Thorpe, **Specialist** in International Chemicals Policy, [bevcp@gmail.com](mailto:bevcp@gmail.com)

Olga Speranskaya, **Health and Environment Justice Support**, [olga.speranskaya@hej-support.org](mailto:olga.speranskaya@hej-support.org)