

## OPINION / EDITORIAL

# LI water districts need guidance to get toxins out of water



Federal health officials have not yet set legally enforceable standards, known as maximum contaminant levels, for the "emerging" contaminants PFOS, PFOA and 1,4-dioxane. Photo Credit: Photo Illustration

**By The Editorial Board**

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The list is getting longer. Newly added: dozens of residents in East Patchogue and Medford getting water in their private wells tested after a nearby public well was found to contain contaminants found in firefighting foam, among other products.

The substances — perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) — are potential carcinogens and have been found in and around airports, fire-training facilities and landfills in Wainscott, Westhampton Beach, Yaphank, East Quogue, Ronkonkoma and Hampton Bays, and at two state Superfund sites.

But the federal government has not set a drinking water standard for PFOS and PFOA beyond a generic limit, and has not released a study that reportedly shows they are dangerous at levels far below that generic standard. And while state officials filed a lawsuit against six companies that make the firefighting foam, the state's Drinking Water Quality Council blew last week's deadline to recommend state limits.

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This is disappointing. PFOA and PFOS are easily filtered with carbon, but water districts need specific limits to guide them. Not having standards has allowed some bad actors to drag their heels on cooperation. Federal and state regulators need to set real standards to meet this emerging problem head-on. No more delays. — *The editorial board*

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