



**ZACH KLEIN**  
COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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Contact: Pete Shipley, 614.965.0203

Email: [pjshipley@columbus.gov](mailto:pjshipley@columbus.gov)

## City of Columbus Files Lawsuit to Hold Companies Accountable for Toxic “Forever Chemical” Production Linked to Contamination

*City Attorney Zach Klein says companies like 3M and DuPont need to be on the hook for cleaning up the mess they made*

**COLUMBUS, OH**—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus filed a lawsuit against several major chemical companies for their negligence in the production of synthetic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as “forever chemicals” due to components in them which break down very slowly. PFAS, which are present in many everyday household items and in the environment, can build up in the body over time and cause certain health problems.

The City’s lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina, joins hundreds of other complaints made by cities across the country who are trying to hold these same companies accountable for the harm they have caused to the environment and risk to public health. In the complaint, the City is asking the Court to order companies to pay for environmental cleanup, including funds for future technology upgrades to ensure the City’s water supply remains safe and meets EPA standards.

**“When corporations dumped toxic waste and pollution into our waterways and air, the government stepped in as a check, enacting EPA regulations to clean up our environment. Now, as companies contaminate our homes and environment with forever chemicals, it’s incumbent on government to step in again to protect the public and hold these corporations accountable for the damage they’ve caused. Companies like 3M and DuPont made this mess and they need to be**

**the ones on the hook for cleaning it up,”** said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein.

According to the City’s complaint, numerous companies like 3M and DuPont produced forever chemicals knowing the toxicity of the products, which contaminated both the environment and homes of millions of Ohioans despite readily available technology to produce alternative products without the use of PFAS chemicals. The City also argues that the corporations failed to warn consumers and the public about the dangerous products, thereby threatening public health and safety.

The City’s lawsuit asks the Court to recover the substantial costs necessary to address any environmental contamination and protect the City’s drinking water supply from toxic forever chemicals, as well as punitive damages and other penalties associated with fraudulent and dangerous business practices the companies used to conceal and profit from the production of toxic forever chemicals.

**“Multi-billion-dollar corporations knowingly produced and sold dangerous products that threaten the health and safety of consumers and the public. These entities must be held accountable for the significant costs incurred by the City to clean up the mess they made,”** said Columbus Solicitor General Rich Coglianese, the City’s head lawyer on the lawsuit.

Research shows that the vast majority of forever chemical exposure comes from air, foods, incidental ingestion and household products, such as nonstick cookware, stain resistant furniture and carpets, wrinkle free and water-repellent clothing, cosmetics, lubricants, paint, pizza boxes, popcorn bags, and many other products including firefighting foams that have been produced for decades by the corporations named in the lawsuit. Over time, exposure to these chemicals have been linked to numerous health issues, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure, fertility issues and certain types of cancers.

While a smaller percentage of PFAS exposure comes from water contamination, the City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities quality assurance lab technicians closely monitor the City’s water supply to ensure that it meets or exceeds all federal drinking water standards.

**“The City closely monitors our water quality to ensure that it meets all current federal and state guidelines for safety and sanitation,”** said City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities Director Kristen Atha. **“By holding corporations that put profits before people and the environment accountable, we can continue to deliver on the promise of affordable clean drinking water in the City of Columbus.”**

City officials say that continued production and use of forever chemicals may require the installation of additional technology to maintain chemical levels in line with EPA standards, a cost which the City believes needs to be borne by the corporations named in the lawsuit.

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