

Important Facts regarding the CERCLA Exemption (HR 7944)

- The Florida Rural Water Association is the non-profit association representing all water and wastewater utility systems across Florida with a combined membership of over 2100 small and rural communities.
- The vast majority of public water and wastewater treatment systems affected by any future federal action for PFAS will be communities with populations of 10,000 or less.
 - In rural communities, with a higher percentage of people living at or near the poverty rate than our urban counterparts, any rate increase is unaffordable for many residents.
- Financially strapped water utilities would be forced to develop alternative payment plans for increasing numbers of distressed customers.
- Unfortunately, many low and fixed-income households would need to choose to pay their water bill using funds that would have previously been used for food, medicine, or other necessities.
- Rural Water emphasizes the significant financial burden that testing, treatment, and disposal costs related to PFAS contamination place on our membership.
- EPA designated PFAS as a “hazardous substance” under CERCLA, and the expenses incurred by small and rural water utilities will be massive including: biosolids management, disposal of PFAS-laden media, legal fees, fines, and potential cleanup costs.
- Our water systems cannot absorb these costs.
- Local governments’ water and wastewater utilities are not “producers” or users of PFAS, and none of these essential public service providers utilize or profit from PFAS chemicals.
- We are passive receivers saddled with the responsibility of managing traces of PFAS coming into our systems.
- Communities impacted by PFAS contamination need assistance in various forms, including funding for treatment, monitoring, on-site technical assistance for immediate response, credible public health information, emergency access to safe drinking water, and compensation from responsible parties for remediation, treatment, and provision of alternative sources of safe drinking water.
- A CERCLA exemption is needed to avoid frivolous lawsuits- please cosponsor H.R. 7944 !
- Without liability protections for water and wastewater systems, CERCLA’s integral “polluter pays” model risks becoming a “public pays” model- the epitome of economic and environmental injustice.