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In 2021, an overwhelming majority of New Yorkers voted to enshrine the right to clean air and water and a healthful environment in the state constitution, but the state has yet to deliver on the promises outlined in the Green Amendment.

3.2 million New Yorkers rely on drinking-water systems that contain unsafe levels of “forever chemicals,” also known as PFAS. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), found in everyday products, including nonstick pans, furniture coatings, paint, and dental floss, are linked to serious health impacts, including liver damage, reduced fertility and cancer.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that only **some** of the hundreds of New York's PFAS-tainted drinking water systems contain levels that are high enough to require filtration before the water reaches New Yorkers' taps, leaving people across the state exposed to unsafe levels of PFAS in their drinking water – often unknowingly.



Bobbi Wilding is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Clean + Healthy.

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Yvonne Taylor is Co-Founder and Vice President of Seneca Lake Guardian.

We can't overlook the considerable progress New York State has made – the state has enacted bans on PFAS in clothing, food packaging, carpets, and more. In 2022, the State adopted a policy requiring consideration of the cumulative impacts of polluting facilities on communities. The EPA just unveiled **new regulations** that will require municipal water systems to remove PFAS from drinking water sources.

New York needs to match the federal government's urgency. We need to cut off PFAS at the source, before people unwittingly use products containing PFAS in their homes and businesses, and before they enter our environment and waterways. New York must require polluters to test and disclose PFAS discharged into our waters. Because so many common products harbor PFAS, landfills are a major contributor to PFAS contamination in New York.

Take Seneca Meadows, the state's largest landfill in Seneca Falls. The mountain of garbage stands 280 feet tall and accepts up to 6,000 tons of waste per day, trucked in from across New York and out of state. When rainwater filters through the dump, it picks up contaminants, including PFAS, and forms leachate – toxic wastewater that runs off from the dump and into the environment.

Seneca Meadows alone produces up to 200,000 gallons of contaminated leachate every single day. This leachate doesn't just impact the local waterways. Seneca Meadows hauls millions of gallons

of its PFAS-laden leachate across the state to Buffalo, Watertown, Chittenango, and Steuben County. These localities don't have the technology or capacity to adequately treat the water to remove the PFAS before it enters their waterways.

If New York wants to get serious about undoing years of damage and contamination, the landfill needs to close when its permit expires in 2025. New York, let's make good on our promise to protect our environment and guarantee the right to clean water for all New Yorkers.

Bobbi Wilding is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Clean + Healthy. Yvonne Taylor is Co-Founder and Vice President of Seneca Lake Guardian.