PFAS

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are manmade chemicals found in everyday products like nonstick cookware, stain-resistant fabrics, and firefighting foam. They persist in the environment and can build up in the body over time. Because of potential health risks, the EPA has set strict drinking water standards for PFAS that take effect in 2029, and Fairfax Water is working to meet them ahead of schedule.

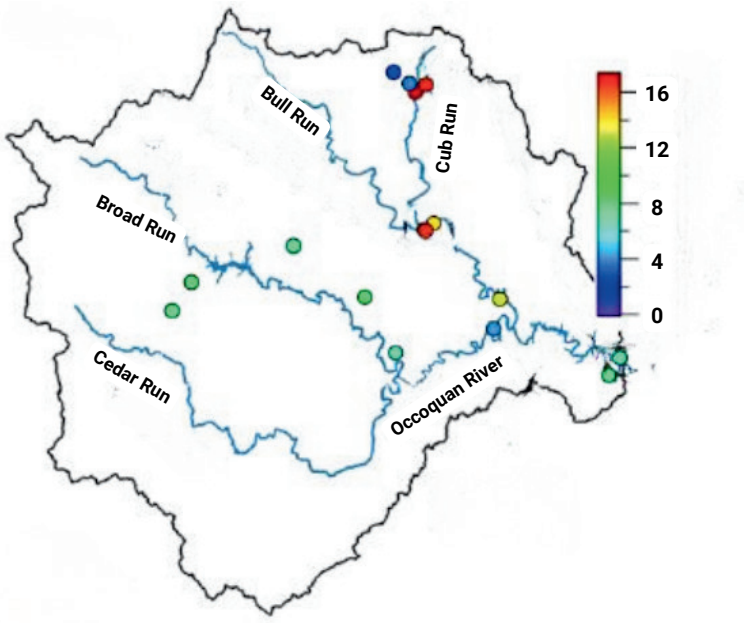
Taking Action

Fairfax Water has been proactively monitoring for PFAS since 2021.

Potomac River samples are consistently below EPA's standards.

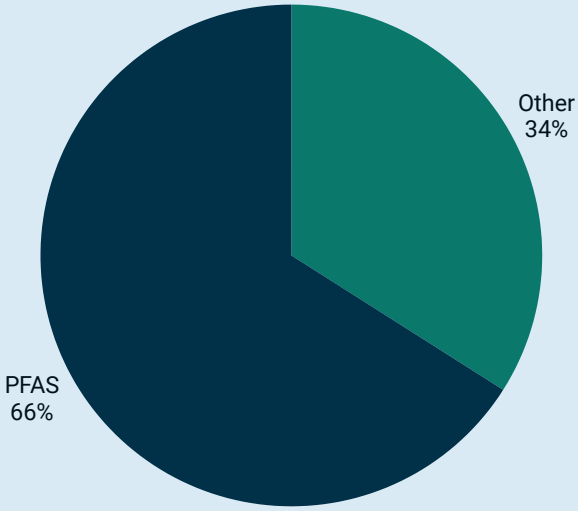
Occoquan Reservoir samples vary above and below EPA's PFOA and PFOS standards.

Fairfax Water is actively searching for sources of PFAS in the Occoquan Watershed



Example of PFAS mapping in the Occoquan Watershed. For illustrative purposes only.

Fairfax Water Capital Improvement Program
2025-2030



Up to **$375 Million** in costs to install treatment

Approximately **$24 Million** in annual O&M costs

Fairfax Water is upgrading its Powdered Activated Carbon Feed System to lower PFAS levels.

Long-term solutions may include using Granular Activated Carbon or Ion Exchange treatment.

Fairfax Water

Comprehensive Approach

Fairfax Water has taken a proactive approach to removing PFAS from drinking water in the most cost-effective manner possible. Concurrently, the organization has worked to secure legislation in the General Assembly to protect the Occoquan from sources of PFAS pollution (HB 2050, 2025) and filed litigation against PFAS manufacturers to protect our ratepayers. Fairfax Water will meet EPA's PFAS drinking water standards by the April 2029 compliance deadline.

Water utilities nationwide must meet new PFAS rules by 2029.

We are installing a powdered activated carbon feed system at the Griffith Plant while continuing to evaluate the most cost-effective long-term strategy for PFAS compliance.

More research is needed to identify PFAS sources and prevent them from entering the water supply.

Our watershed studies are a collaborative effort with universities, regional utilities and other stakeholders to learn more about PFAS sources and how PFAS travels throughout the environment.



Water utilities can't solve this problem alone.

HB 2050 (2025) was an important step in protecting the Occoquan and public health.

We're continuing to work with the state legislature to advance laws that prevent PFAS contamination in drinking water sources.

Fairfax Water believes polluters should pay.

We filed suit against PFAS manufacturers for the widespread contamination with PFAS of our drinking water sources in the Occoquan and Potomac watersheds.

Your Support Matters

- Polluters should be held responsible for removing PFAS from the environment, not the public through increased water rates.
- PFAS is most effectively stopped at the source. Strong policy is needed to prevent PFAS from entering the environment.
- PFAS treatment is expensive. Funding opportunities must be available and attainable by systems of all sizes.

Fairfax Water