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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Maryland Files Lawsuit against W. L. Gore for PFAS Contamination

*Complaint Alleges That the Company Released Toxic “Forever Chemicals” for More Than Half a Century, and That the Company Knew About the Associated Dangers but Concealed Them*

**BALTIMORE, MD (December 18, 2024)** – Attorney General Brown announced the filing of a [complaint](#) today in the U.S. District Court for Maryland against W.L. Gore & Associates for putting residents’ health at risk with contamination from toxic Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). The complaint asks the court to order Gore to pay all costs relating to the investigation and cleanup of PFAS contamination attributable to several facilities Gore owns and operates in Cecil County, Maryland.

According to the allegations in the complaint, Gore, while profiting from the products it manufactured in Maryland, knew for decades that a type of PFAS released during manufacturing at its Cecil County facilities was toxic and posed significant risks to human health and the environment. Gore continued to knowingly emit perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) into the air and water without protecting the surrounding communities, causing widespread contamination of drinking water and the State’s natural resources, including surface water, groundwater, soils, sediments, plant, and animal life.

The Maryland Department of the Environment has been actively engaged in assessing PFAS contamination near Gore’s operations in the Elkton, Cecil County area, including providing sampling of residents’ private drinking water wells.

“PFAS are linked to cancer, weakened immune systems, and can even harm the ability to bear children,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “It is unacceptable for any company to knowingly contaminate our drinking water with these toxins, putting Marylanders at risk of severe health conditions. Our office will not tolerate companies that put profits ahead of the health and safety of Maryland families.”

“While we appreciate Gore’s limited investigation to ascertain the extent of PFAS contamination around its facilities, much more needs to be done to protect the community and the health of

residents,” said **Maryland Department of the Environment Secretary Serena McIlwain**. “We must remove these forever chemicals from our natural resources urgently, and we expect responsible parties to pay for this remediation.”

PFOA is one of the most studied and regulated PFAS. In April 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set an enforceable drinking water standard for PFOA. The EPA has also listed PFOA as a hazardous substance under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, which gives the federal government broad authority to regulate hazardous substances.

PFOA and other PFAS are also known as “forever chemicals” because they remain in the environment for hundreds of years. Once PFAS have contaminated natural resources, the contamination can remain for decades, even if the source of the contamination is addressed. The complaint details how exposure to PFAS may lead to significant negative health effects, including reproductive effects including decreased fertility and pregnancy-induced hypertension; developmental effects in children including low birth weight, accelerated puberty, bone variations, or behavioral changes; increased risk of certain cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers; immune system effects, including reduced vaccine response; interference with the body’s natural hormones; and increased cholesterol and increased risk of obesity.

The complaint involves 13 Gore facilities in the Elkton area. While the full extent of PFAS contamination from Gore’s facilities is not yet fully assessed, Maryland has already incurred costs necessary to investigate, treat, and remediate the contamination that Gore has caused and will continue to incur costs that should be borne by Gore, and not the State. Gore’s PFAS have also contaminated state-owned lands, including the Fair Hill Natural Resources Area.

The lawsuit cites violations of both CERCLA and Maryland environmental law. The State seeks broad relief from Gore, including recovery of the costs of investigating the scope of contamination; the costs of drinking water testing, monitoring, and treatment; the costs to remediate the contamination; and damages for harm to state-owned land and resources.

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