



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF DANE COUNTY

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Date: May 6, 2021

TO: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway  
Members of the Madison Common Council

City of Madison Mayor's Office  
210 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, room 403  
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Sustainable Madison Committee's recommendation to address PFAS contamination and associated health risks, dated April 27, 2021

The League of Women Voters of Dane County (LWVDC) has long been a strong supporter of efforts to protect the environmental quality of our community, including the quality of our drinking water. It is the League's position that access to clean drinking water is a fundamental human right. The League is therefore in support of any effort to address PFAS contamination in Dane County.

PFAS are a group of highly toxic and persistent compounds. Evidence has mounted linking PFAS to serious health problems, including cancer, liver damage, and developmental defects. Because they accumulate in human and animal tissue, PFAS are of concern at very low concentrations (measured in parts per trillion, or ppt).

PFAS compounds are water-soluble and are therefore easily transported from their source by moving surface waters and, after entering groundwater through percolation, can form plumes that readily migrate and contaminate water wells miles from the source.

A major source of PFAS contamination is firefighting foam containing PFAS which has been used widely, particularly at airports and military installations. It is therefore not surprising that Madison is facing a PFAS contamination problem, with the Dane County airport being the likely source. Results of well water tests show that the chemical is now present in all of Madison's public wells. DNR tests found a concentration of several hundred ppt of PFAS in Starkweather Creek and several thousand ppt in the foam near the creek's boat launch at Olbrich Park. PFAS has now spread through the lower Yahara lake system, and DNR has issued a fish consumption advisory for Starkweather Creek and Lake Monona.

The League of Women Voters is concerned about this growing problem of PFAS contamination in Madison. We have thanked the Madison Fire Department for ending the use of firefighting foam containing PFAS, and we urged the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission to play a positive leadership role by sampling and testing for a range of PFAS compounds.

The LWVDC therefore also support the Sustainable Madison Committee's recommendation for the City of Madison to address PFAS contamination and associated health risks dated April 27, 2021.

We urge you, as Mayor, to endorse these recommendations. We urge you, the members of the Common Council, to endorse these recommendations. We urge the Council and the Mayor to act in concert by reviving the PFAS Task Force proposed in 2019, by creating transparent and understandable communication to the public, and by conducting a health impact assessment.

Sincerely,

Chris Clements  
LWVDC President