

Board Proposes Amendments to Groundwater Quality Standards for First Notice

On March 7, 2024, the Board proposed first-notice amendments to update its groundwater quality rules in 35 Ill. Adm. Code 620. The proposed changes will uphold the policy of the Illinois Groundwater Protection Act “to restore, protect, and enhance the groundwaters of the State, as a natural and public resource.” 415 ILCS 55/2(b) (2022). Among the amendments, the Board proposes adding groundwater quality standards for ten new chemicals detected in Illinois groundwater, including six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances or “PFAS.”

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) initiated this rulemaking by filing with the Board a proposal designed to ensure that Illinois’ groundwater quality standards match current scientific data and methodologies for groundwater quality. During the rulemaking, the Board held three public hearings and received numerous public comments. As discussed in its first-notice opinion, the Board considered all the testimony, evidence, and comments received in arriving at its proposed amendments.

Publication of the Board’s proposal in the *Illinois Register* will start a first-notice public comment period of at least 45 days. During this period, anyone may file a public comment with the Board. Further, in its first-notice opinion, the Board posed a series of questions to IEPA and requested that IEPA file answers to them within 30 days after the proposed amendments are published in the *Illinois Register*. However, anyone else may also file answers to those questions by the same 30-day deadline. Once the proposed amendments are published in the *Illinois Register*, the Board’s hearing officer will issue an order setting the specific dates of both the 30-day deadline for answering questions and the close of the first-notice public comment period. The staggered deadlines will permit the filing of comments responsive to the answers received.

The rulemaking is captioned [Proposed Amendments to Groundwater Quality 35 Ill. Adm. Code 620](#), docket R22-18. Here are links to (1) the Board’s first-notice [opinion and order](#) and (2) the [addendum](#) to the Board’s first-notice opinion and order, which contains the text of the proposed amendments. For more information, please contact Vanessa Horton at 312-814-5053 or vanessa.horton@illinois.gov