

Board Adopts Final Amendments to Groundwater Quality Standards, Including for PFAS

On March 20, 2025, the Board issued an opinion and order adopting final amendments to its groundwater quality rules at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 620. Before final adoption, the Board held three public hearings, admitted 33 hearing exhibits, received 81 public comments, and issued opinions and orders at first notice, proposed second notice, and second notice.

The final amendments establish numerical groundwater quality standards for ten new constituents that have been detected in Illinois groundwater, including six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances commonly called “PFAS.” PFAS are known as “forever chemicals” because their carbon-fluorine bonds are very strong. They do not easily degrade. PFAS are bio-accumulative, which means that they can concentrate in tissues of living organisms, including humans. The abbreviated names of the six PFAS constituents for which the Board added Part 620 standards are: PFOA; PFOS; PFNA; PFBS; PFHxS; and HFPO-DA (also known as “GenX”). The other new constituents that received Part 620 standards are molybdenum, lithium, aluminum, and 1-methylnaphthalene.

Along with these new groundwater quality standards, the Board revised the existing Class I and Class II standards of 34 chemical constituents. The Board’s amendments also include extensive clarifications to the Board’s 33-year-old groundwater management zone or “GMZ” rules, as well as the addition of provisions addressing the interplay between Part 620 and the rules at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845 on coal combustion residual or “CCR” surface impoundments.

As adopted, Part 620 includes numerous non-substantive changes suggested by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) and agreed to by the Board. At its March 4, 2025 meeting, JCAR issued a certification of no objection to the amendments.

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 [final opinion and order](#); and (2) the [addendum](#) to the Board’s final opinion and order, which contains the text of the adopted amendments. For more information, please contact Vanessa Horton at 312-814-5053 or vanessa.horton@illinois.gov.