DuPont and Chemours Still Discharging Forever Chemicals

PFAS, commonly known as “forever chemicals” are chemicals that have been linked to cancer and numerous other health problems including thyroid issues, reproductive and developmental issues, and high cholesterol. Forever chemicals are called such because they never break down in the environment.

So why are DuPont and other similar companies still discharging these chemicals from their facilities?

In 2001, it came became well known that a type of PFAS called PFOA, which is used to make Teflon, contaminated the drinking water of 70,000 people near a DuPont factory in West Virginia. Several lawsuits and lots of pressure from the EPA later, DuPont and other companies pledged to phase out PFOA and stop usage after 2015.

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Earlier this month, California representative Harley Rouda, sent a letter to DuPont and Chemours questioning why PFAS were still being discharged at their factories. Despite the known toxicity, there are no federal enforcements on PFAS in drinking water, groundwater, or soils, and only five states have regulations on PFAS. There are also no requirements to clean up PFAS under the Federal Superfund Law.

> *The continued releases could be an indication that the two companies are still using PFOA, despite their assurances otherwise. If so, that would be a serious breach of public trust. But there are other possible explanations for these discharges. There could be PFOA in products or mixtures used at the facilities. Or “legacy” PFOA remaining in water used at the facilities could be showing up – an alarming reminder*

of the chemical’s persistence in the environment.

Both companies have publicly said they no longer use PFOA, yet, the EPA’s history shows ongoing discharge from two different facilities. One site in Parkersburg reported 323.5 pounds of PFOA released in 2019.

Forever chemicals produced by companies like DuPont and 3M have been contaminating our earth for decades. Information released has shown that these companies knew the dangers of these chemicals as early as the 1950s. If you have any interest in learning more about forever chemicals, I highly recommend the Mark Ruffalo film “Dark Waters”. Dark Waters follows the true story of a corporate defense attorney who took on an environmental lawsuit against DuPont, exposing the decades of pollution.