

# U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Information Collection Request: POTW Influent PFAS Study Data



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03/29/2024

The United State Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) published a notice in the March 26th Federal Register that it is planning to submit an information collection request titled:

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency POTW Influent PFAS Study Data Collection.*

See EPA 89 Fed. Reg. 20962.

The request is being submitted to the Office of Management of Budget for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act.

The information request objective is stated to include obtaining data from Publicly Owned Treatment Works (“POTWs”) addressing:

- PFAS discharges from upstream industrial facilities.
- Presence of PFAS in POTW influent, effluent, and sewage sludge.

PFAS consists of a large group of man-made chemicals that are generically referred to as PFAS. Their properties can include resistance to heat, water, and oil. They have been described as persistent in the environment and resist degradation. Potential human exposure to PFAS include pathways through drinking water, air, or food.

Concern has been expressed that POTWs receive discharges that may contain PFAS from some commercial and industrial sources. A further complication is the fact that conventional POTW wastewater treatment does not effectively remove PFAS that they receive. They may be passed through treatment to water bodies or interfere with management of sludge from the treatment process.

EPA has stated that it will collect nationwide data on industrial discharges of PFAS to POTWs. The POTW influent PFAS study will include analysis of indirect discharges from certain categories identified as discharging PFAS for which insufficient monitoring data exists. This is intended to enable EPA to characterize the type and quantity of PFAS in wastewater discharges from industrial users to POTWs. Such sampling data will be used to identify and prioritize industrial point source categories where additional study or regulations may be warranted to control PFAS discharges.

The sewage sludge sampling is stated to be needed to fulfill EPA’s data needs for an upcoming National Sewage Sludge Survey.

EPA estimates that approximately 400 POTWs with the highest daily flow rates in the United States will be required to complete a mandatory electronic questionnaire. Such information and data collected in the

questionnaire will be used to select a subset of 200-300 POTWs to participate in a two-phase sampling program. In addition, the agency states it will develop a data submission portal which will allow states, municipal authorities, and POTWs (including those not selected to complete the questionnaire sampling program) to voluntarily submit existing data characterizing PFAS in industrial user effluent, domestic wastewater, and POTW influent, effluent, and sewage sludge/biosolids.

A copy of the Federal Register notice can be downloaded [here](#).