

# PFAS Lobbying: Mid-2025 Update

Food & Water Watch's (FWW) latest analysis of industry lobbying expenditures shows how PFAS-related corporations and trade associations have spent up to \$60 million lobbying the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and more than \$12 million lobbying the White House, on PFAS-related issues in the first half of 2025. This lobbying has been complemented by former chemical industry lobbyists and industry players being appointed to key positions in the Trump administration.

Decades of hidden schemes and weak chemical regulation have allowed for toxic PFAS, otherwise known as 'forever chemicals,' to spread virtually everywhere. Continued industry lobbying, combined with a revolving door of industry insiders, has set the stage for a massive rollback of public health protections. In September 2025, the Trump EPA asked a federal appeals court to throw out the regulations limiting four types of PFAS in drinking water. This followed a plan laid out in May 2025 to roll back the Biden-era PFAS federal drinking water protections for those four types of PFAS, and grant water utilities until 2031 to comply with two remaining drinking water limits.<sup>1</sup> In proposing this rollback, the Trump EPA essentially caved to industry demands.<sup>2</sup> The EPA has also delayed a decision on whether it will defend the polluter pay rules from a chemical industry lawsuit. Internal EPA documents leaked to the *New York Times* indicated that the Trump EPA changed its position after meeting with industry representatives, and will seek to roll back those regulations as well — a dangerous outcome that will leave the public on the hook to pay for PFAS cleanups.<sup>3</sup>

## Industry Lobbying

### *Key lobbying findings*

- In the first half of 2025, 17 industry trade groups and companies representing the PFAS polluters, fossil fuel industry, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce pro- PFAS deregulation coalition group, collectively spent up to \$60 million lobbying the EPA and more than \$12 million lobbying the White House on PFAS-related issues.
- The groups involved in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's coalition against PFAS regulation have spent up to \$272.8 million in PFAS-related lobbying expenses since 2023. One of the coalition's public comments that recommended regulatory rollbacks for PFAS was signed and published in 2025, and the coalition has spent up to \$50.5 million lobbying the EPA and \$8.6 million lobbying White House on PFAS-related issues in the first half of 2025.

### *PFAS producers*

- In the first half of 2025, five major current and former PFAS producers spent over \$6 million in PFAS-related lobbying towards federal agencies in addition to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Up to 90 percent of the money spent this year went towards lobbying the EPA. Compared to the first half of last year, PFAS-related spending geared towards the EPA on behalf of the industry has increased by 25 percent.

## Fossil Fuel Industry

- Major players in the fossil fuel industry have spent up to \$64.4 million on PFAS-related lobbying from 2023 to mid-2025. In the first half of 2025, they spent up to over \$7 million. Up to \$4.1 million went towards lobbying the White House, and up to \$7.1 million towards lobbying the EPA.

## Background

FWW's previous PFAS analysis highlighted how as awareness of PFAS risks spread and regulators and lawmakers advanced regulations and cleanup funding, the chemical industry responded by ramping up its lobbying efforts.<sup>4</sup> In 2024, the Biden EPA issued long awaited regulations to establish nationwide limits on six types of PFAS in drinking water and to hold polluters accountable to clean up two forms (PFOA and PFOS) under the Superfund polluter pays law. These were among the first meaningful steps to address the widespread crisis of PFAS contamination.<sup>5</sup>

Circumstances have changed as Trump's EPA administrator, Lee Zeldin, has reframed the agency's mission around industry support, dismantling its own research arm and taking funds away from PFAS research, while promoting deregulation and appointing industry insiders to key positions.<sup>6</sup>

With research continuing to emerge on the frightening health harms of PFAS and the latest federal data confirming millions more people have PFAS in their drinking water than previously estimated,<sup>7</sup> this deregulatory drive will have deadly consequences.

## Revolving door concerns

The Trump administration's EPA is now stacked with industry lobbyists, lawyers, and insiders. Before being Zeldin's current second-in-command at the EPA, David Fotouhi worked as a lawyer defending polluters against Clean Air Act and EPA chemical regulation enforcement. Nancy Beck, a current senior EPA adviser on chemical safety and pollution regulation, used to be a director at and a lobbyist for the American Chemistry Council (ACC). In a prior role at EPA, she advocated to weaken regulations, making it harder to track and regulate the health consequences of PFAS.<sup>8</sup> Lynn Dekleva, another former ACC lobbyist, worked at DuPont for over 30 years before being placed in charge of greenlighting new chemicals for the market at EPA. Federal reports have even documented how she has retaliated against employees who raised concerns about chemicals she wanted to approve for use.<sup>9</sup> Steven Cook, a former PFAS-polluter defender, now works as a principal deputy within the EPA and is currently seeking to scrap PFAS polluter pay rules.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

Some of the majorly implicated companies and trade groups have been potentially spending upwards up to \$60 million for PFAS-related lobbying in the first half of 2025 alone — historically, their pockets run deep for this cause. With a pro-PFAS Trump administration on their side, there is no telling the damage this money could inflict.

## Methodology

FWW compiled federal lobbying reports related to per-and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances using the U.S. House of Representatives' Lobbying Disclosure database. PFAS-related reports from 2023 up to the second quarter in 2025 (the 118th and 119th Congresses) were pulled while referencing entities examined in FWW's 2023 report on PFAS lobbying.<sup>11</sup> Pursuant to the federal Lobbying Disclosure Act, quarterly federal lobbying reports are required to identify the federal offices lobbied, what issues they addressed, who lobbied on it, and the total lobbying expenditures for the quarter. However, expenditures are not 'itemized' by a given bill, federal agency, or issue. Therefore, lobbying figures in this memo represent total expenditures across quarterly reports that mention PFAS or a related PFAS bill. These amounts reflect the *potential* amount of money spent while connected to a specific federal agency or 'subject' (i.e., 'PFAS'). Since there are two fossil fuel trade groups included in the Chamber of Commerce coalition, some minor data overlap is observed; grouping totals are thus specifically tied to the grouping themselves.<sup>12</sup> For a more in-depth understanding of FWW methodology, please see FWW's previous PFAS report.<sup>13</sup>

## Endnotes

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- 1 Snider, Annie. "EPA moves to weaken drinking water limits on toxic 'forever chemicals.'" *Politico*. May 14, 2025; Phillis, Michael. "EPA announces rollback for some Biden-era limits in 'forever chemicals' in drinking water." *AP News*. May 14, 2025; Perkins, Tom. "US imposes first-ever limits on levels of toxic PFAS in drinking water." *Guardian*. April 10, 2024; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). [Press release]. "Biden-Harris administration finalizes critical rule to clean up PFAS contamination to protect public health." April 19, 2024.
- 2 U.S Chamber of Commerce et al. Letter to Office of Management and Budget. "Notice of Request for Information to identify rules to be rescinded and provide detailed reasons for the rescission." May 12, 2025.
- 3 Tabuchi, Hiroko. "An industry insider's changes at the E.P.A. could cost taxpayers billions." *New York Times*. August 28, 2025.
- 4 Food & Water Watch (FWW). "PFAS and the Chemistry of Concealment." November 2023 at 2 and 3.
- 5 EPA. [Press release]. "Biden-Harris Administration finalizes first-ever national drinking water standard to protect 100M people from PFAS pollution." April 10, 2024.
- 6 Perkins, Tom. "Trump administration yank \$15m in research into PFAS on US farms: 'not just stupid, it's evil.'" *Guardian*. July 15, 2025.
- 7 Perkins, Tom. "Exposure to some common PFAS changes gene activity, new study finds." *Guardian*. August 15, 2025; EPA. "The Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 5) Data Summary: July 2025." EPA 815-S-25-003. July 2025 at 12.
- 8 Freidman, Lisa et al. "Trump stocks EPA with oil, gas, and chemical lobbyists." *New York Times*. January 25, 2025; Tabuchi, Hiroko. "She lobbied for a carcinogen. Now she's at the EPA, approving new chemicals." *New York Times*. Updated March 17, 2025.
- 9 Tabuchi (2025); Freidman (2025).
- 10 Freidman (2025).
- 11 FWW (2023).
- 12 These entities include top PFAS manufacturers, the American Chemistry Council, top oil and gas producers, and U.S. Chamber of Commerce-led coalition group against PFAS regulation. See U.S. Chamber of Commerce. [Press release]. "U.S Chamber coalition letter on PFAS deregulatory approach." May 12, 2025.
- 13 FWW (2023).