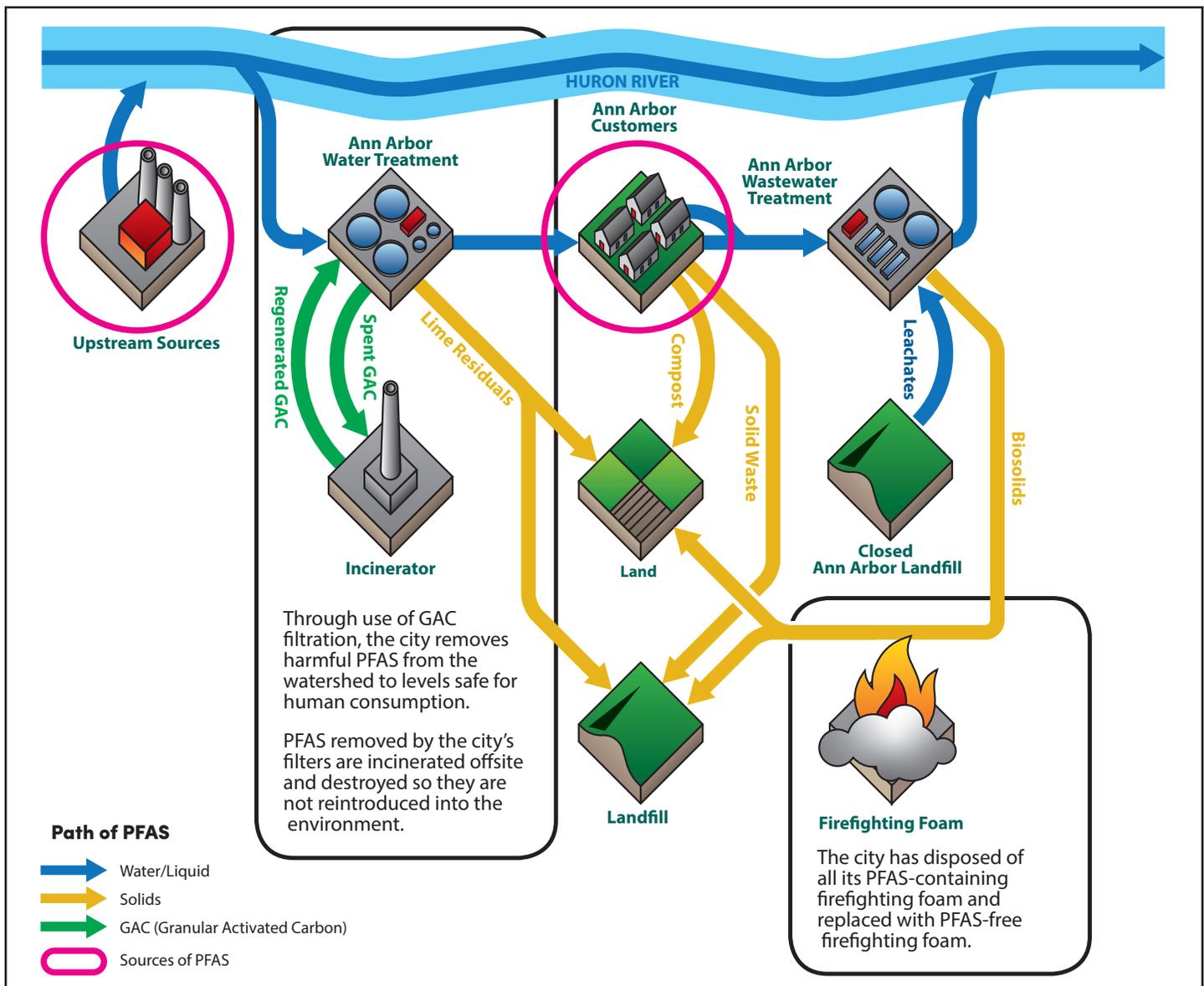


# Keeping our customers informed about PFAS



## CITY KEEPS CUSTOMERS INFORMED ABOUT PFAS SOURCES

Most people know that per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly referred to as PFAS) can come from a variety of sources and flow into the community from waterways. What many don't know, is that PFAS also can be found in household solid waste and anywhere PFAS-containing products are used. The above graphic helps to illustrate the complexity of PFAS, including its sources and the multiple paths it takes through our community.

**REMOVING PFAS ACTION PLAN:** The city continues to proactively investigate sources of PFAS and ways to eliminate contamination. In 2018 and 2019, the city installed a new type of granular activated carbon in our filters to increase removal of PFAS from our drinking water. The filters have been working as expected and the levels of PFAS have dropped even further below the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) health advisory levels, some to undetectable amounts. In the fall of 2018, the Ann Arbor Fire Department halted the use of foam containing PFAS for training purposes and has since purchased an alternative option for fighting flammable liquid fires such as gasoline, oil and other hydrocarbons.

**COMPOST:** In the city's continuing efforts to support and investigate possible sources of PFAS, city staff recently tested Ann Arbor's compost. Results tested positive for low levels of 13 types of PFAS ranging from 0.040 parts per billion (ppb) to 17 ppb. Soil samples are measured in ppb. The water in the ponds at the compost facility was also sampled and tested positive for 12 types of PFAS ranging from 0.44 parts per trillion (ppt) to 680 ppt.

At this time, the research on PFAS in compost, is extremely limited. In addition, there is no scientifically approved method for how to test PFAS in soil, so while trace amounts were found there are no established health advisory guidelines for the city or residents to follow. What we do know is we want our customers to be informed of these results and actions we are taking to further reduce contamination.

Solid waste facilities, such as landfills and compost sites routinely receive PFAS-containing items, such as grease-resistant paper, fast food containers, microwave popcorn bags, fertilizer bags, water-resistant clothing, nonstick cookware,

cleaning products and stain-resistant carpet. Although these items are prohibited in the city's compost program, several of these items are routinely and improperly placed in compost carts.

Ann Arbor's compost facility provides compost to some of our city parks for topsoil. Free compost is available to city residents in the spring and compost is sold via the city's vendor: We Care Organics.

**PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS:** The water quality team at the City of Ann Arbor continues to support on-going investigations to determine any possible sources of PFAS that could enter our source waters and compost. We understand eliminating the sources of PFAS is the best way to keep it out of our drinking water and our compost. The city has partnered with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), in its efforts to identify sources and prevent PFAS from entering our waterways and is exploring opportunities

for researching sources of PFAS in compost. The city strongly believes in the importance of informing our customers about PFAS test results and the proactive steps we are taking to protect the city's resources.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** The city remains dedicated to improving water and waste treatment processes and learning more about PFAS sources and its pathways. That's why we will continue to investigate possible sources of PFAS and explore ways to reduce contamination by participating in research and seeking partnership opportunities with local and state experts. Currently, we are working with North Carolina State University, a leader in PFAS research in the U.S., to explore new technologies for removing PFAS from drinking water.

**STAY INFORMED:** To review all PFAS test result data and learn more about your drinking water and the City of Ann Arbor's efforts to protect its safety, visit [www.a2gov.org/PFAS](http://www.a2gov.org/PFAS).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PFAS IN COMPOST

### ***What is compost and how it is useful?***

Compost is decomposed organic material made with items such as leaves, shredded twigs, and kitchen food scraps. It provides many essential nutrients for plant growth and therefore is often used as fertilizer.

### ***Why did the city test for PFAS in compost?***

In its continuing efforts to support and investigate possible sources of PFAS, the city had an independent lab test Ann Arbor's compost.

### ***What were the lab test results for PFAS in compost?***

Results tested positive for low levels of 13 types of PFAS ranging from 0.040 parts per billion (ppb) to 17 ppb. Soil samples are measured in ppb. The water in the ponds at the compost facility was also sampled and tested positive for 12 types of PFAS ranging from 0.44 parts per trillion (ppt) to 680 ppt.

### ***Are there advisory levels for PFAS in compost?***

At this time, there are no established testing methods or health advisory guidelines for compost materials. Even though there are no scientifically approved methods for testing PFAS in soil or established health advisory guidelines for using PFAS-containing compost, the city felt it was important to test the compost and to let its residents know the results.

### ***How did PFAS get in the compost?***

Solid waste facilities, such as landfills and compost sites receive PFAS-containing items, such as grease-resistant paper, fast food containers, microwave popcorn bags, fertilizer bags, water-resistant clothing, nonstick cookware, cleaning products and stain-resistant carpet. Although these items are prohibited in the city's compost program, several of these items are improperly placed in compost carts.

### ***What is PFAS?***

It is an abbreviation for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances which are man-made chemicals used in metal plating and a wide variety of consumer products including carpets, paints, food containers, polishes and waxes.

### ***What are other cities learning about PFAS in compost?***

There are very few cities testing for PFAS in compost and thus there is very little data available.

### ***Where is Ann Arbor's compost applied?***

Ann Arbor's compost facility provides compost to some of its city parks for topsoil. Also, free compost is available to city residents in the spring and it is sold via the city's vendor: We Care Organics.

### ***What is the city doing to understand the effects of PFAS in compost?***

The city is carefully following this issue at the national level and is exploring opportunities for researching sources of PFAS in compost. We will continue to monitor incoming compost for improper materials and expand our education to residents about acceptable compost materials. While emerging contaminants may continue to be detected, the city's dedicated staff are prepared to not only face these challenges, but also to remain an industry leader in pioneering solutions.

### ***What can I do to keep PFAS out of compost materials?***

Share your knowledge with family and neighbors of the importance of keeping only acceptable materials in curbside compost bins and bags. Let others know that PFAS containing products should never be added to compost bins and bags. For a list of acceptable materials visit [www.a2gov.org/compost](http://www.a2gov.org/compost).

### ***Where can I learn more about PFAS?***

**City of Ann Arbor website:** [www.a2gov.org/PFAS](http://www.a2gov.org/PFAS)

**Michigan Environment, Great Lakes and Energy:** [www.michigan.gov/egle](http://www.michigan.gov/egle)

**Environmental Protection Agency:** [www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas](http://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas)