



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB3681

Introduced 2/5/2026, by Sen. Mike Simmons

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Protect the Great Lakes Act. Provides that, at the start of each month, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago shall test for the presence of microplastics and PFAS in Lake Michigan and the Environmental Protection Agency shall test for the presence of microplastics and PFAS in the Illinois drinking water system. Provides that, at the end of each month, the District shall submit a report to the Environmental Protection Agency containing the test results taken at the start of the month. Provides that, after one year of testing and reporting, the District and Environmental Protection Agency shall submit a report to the General Assembly. Provides that the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Public Health shall establish an intergovernmental working group. Provides that the group shall meet at the beginning of every month to (i) address the effects of microplastic and PFAS water pollution on public health and (ii) find ways to eliminate microplastic and PFAS water pollution. Provides that, every 6 months, the group shall submit a report to the General Assembly containing recommendations to eliminate microplastic and PFAS water pollution. Effective January 1, 2027.

LRB104 19275 BDA 32721 b

1 AN ACT concerning safety.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Protect the Great Lakes Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

7 (1) An International Joint Commission Great Lakes
8 Science Advisory Board Microplastics Work Group was
9 established in 2022 to address growing concerns over the
10 presence and potential ecological effects of microplastics
11 in the transboundary waters of the Great Lakes.

12 (2) Laboratory toxicity tests show that microplastics
13 can adversely affect species relevant to the Great Lakes.
14 Several laboratory studies have found effects of
15 microplastics on organisms including tissue inflammation,
16 changes to gene expression, reduced growth and feeding,
17 decreased reproductive output, and increased mortality.
18 Plastics can also leach additives or sorb contaminants
19 present in the environment and may potentially act as
20 vectors for other toxic compounds.

21 (3) Most of what is known about PFAS comes from
22 studies of humans and animals exposed to perfluorooctanoic
23 acid and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid. PFOA and PFOS are

1 no longer produced in the United States, but they continue
2 to be detected in human blood, along with other PFAS.
3 Exposure to PFAS in contaminated drinking water may result
4 in the following health effects:

5 (A) increased cholesterol levels;

6 (B) liver damage;

7 (C) increased risk for thyroid disease;

8 (D) high blood pressure or preeclampsia during
9 pregnancy;

10 (E) small decreases in infant birth weights;

11 (F) decreased vaccine response in children; and

12 (G) increased risk of cancers.

13 (4) A regionally coordinated monitoring program
14 following harmonized methods and adhering to consistent
15 reporting guidelines should be implemented to inform
16 ecological risk assessment, mitigation, and management of
17 microplastic and PFAS in the Great Lakes.

18 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

19 "District" means the Metropolitan Water Reclamation
20 District of Greater Chicago.

21 "Microplastic" means a plastic particle less than 5 mm in
22 size.

23 "Perfluoroalkyl substance or polyfluoroalkyl substance" or
24 "PFAS" means a class of fluorinated organic chemicals
25 containing at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom.

1 Section 15. Pilot program. At the start of each month, the
2 District shall test for the presence of microplastics and PFAS
3 in Lake Michigan and the Environmental Protection Agency shall
4 test for the presence of microplastics and PFAS in the
5 Illinois drinking water system. At the end of each month, the
6 District shall submit a report to the Environmental Protection
7 Agency containing the test results taken at the start of the
8 month. After one year of testing and reporting, the District
9 and Environmental Protection Agency shall submit a report to
10 the General Assembly.

11 Section 20. Working group. The Environmental Protection
12 Agency and the Department of Public Health shall establish an
13 intergovernmental working group. The group shall meet at the
14 beginning of every month to (i) address the effects of
15 microplastic and PFAS water pollution on public health and
16 (ii) find ways to eliminate microplastic and PFAS water
17 pollution. Every 6 months, the group shall submit a report to
18 the General Assembly containing recommendations to eliminate
19 microplastic and PFAS water pollution.

20 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect January
21 1, 2027.