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SIXTEEN MILLION NEW YORKERS SERVED BY WATER SYSTEMS WITH UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS

NEW NYPIRG REPORT REVEALS PREVALENCE OF EMERGING CONTAMINANTS IN NEW YORK DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES

(Albany, N.Y.) A new report from the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) revealed the prevalence of emerging contaminants detected in the state's public drinking water supplies.

All across New York State, from Hoosick Falls to Long Island, there has been considerable public debate over three specific emerging contaminants – PFOA, PFOS and 1,4-dioxane. But there are over 20 additional emerging contaminants that the federal government requires be tested in water systems serving 10,000 or more residents that are the subject of the report, *What's in My Water*.

NYPIRG's review of the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule data (2013-2015) **found that 176 water systems detected one or more emerging contaminants, affecting nearly 16 million New Yorkers.**

Liz Moran, Environmental Policy Director and lead report author, said: "Chemicals that can harm public health should not be detected in drinking water supplies. Even with limited testing, millions of New Yorkers are drinking water that contains emerging contaminants that have the potential to put their health at risk. New York State needs to stop kicking the can down the road and set stringent drinking water standards and test statewide for chemicals like PFOA, PFOS, 1,4-dioxane and more."

Key findings:

- 176 water systems detected one or more UCMR-3 contaminants, affecting nearly 16 million New Yorkers.
- The Long Island region has, by far, the most detections of emerging contaminants found in drinking water.
- Seven UCMR-3 emerging contaminants were detected above EPA's reference concentrations.
- 6.4 million New York State residents served by smaller public systems or private wells consume water that has not been tested for emerging contaminants.

In addition to identifying emerging contaminant detections in New York, the report offers a roadmap to prevent drinking water contamination. New York State already has many tools at its disposal to test statewide for emerging contaminants, regulate chemicals in drinking water, and prevent contamination before it affects our drinking water.

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Recommendations:

1. The Department of Health must immediately begin statewide testing of emerging contaminants, starting with UCMR-3 contaminants that have already shown up in New York water systems, for every public water system, regardless of size.
2. Establish stringent drinking water standards for chemicals that may be unsafe for public health. Require testing for private household wells.
3. Create a single user-friendly statewide public database for drinking water information.
4. Adopt precautionary approaches to source water protection and chemicals by prohibiting use of chemicals until they can be proven safe, and preserving watershed.

The report can be found online at nypirg.org.