



FLORIDA'S OUTDATED WATER PROTECTIONS PUT PEOPLE AT RISK

Florida's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters should be safe for drinking, swimming, fishing, and shellfish harvesting. To protect people, the state sets Human Health Criteria — pollution limits on dozens of harmful chemicals, meant to reduce cancer and illness risks from contaminated water and seafood.

The problem? Florida's standards are dangerously out of date.

- **Outdated science:** The last update of the standards was in 1992 — more than 30 years ago. At the time, Florida assumed people eat only one bite of fish per day (6.5 grams). Today, the EPA recommends using a much higher average of 22 grams per day — and many Floridians eat more.
- **Weak Protections:** Florida only has limits for 40 toxic pollutants, and even those limits don't reflect modern science.
- **Major gaps:** At least 37 toxic pollutants found in Florida waters have no limits at all.

Because the state has stalled for decades, in August 2025, Waterkeepers Florida (including Miami Waterkeeper) and the Environmental Defense Alliance petitioned the EPA to develop new, more protective limits. Back in 2022, the EPA and Florida agreed that Florida's rules don't protect public health. After waiting a year for Florida to write new rules, the EPA took over the process, with one year to develop new limits. The EPA began writing new standards for 77 toxic pollutants and filed draft rules. But in January 2025, EPA halted all new rules and withdrew the draft rules. Compounding decades of dangerous delays, Waterkeepers Florida (including Miami Waterkeeper) and the Environmental Defense Alliance have now filed a lawsuit against EPA to enforce the Clean Water Act and compel the agency to finalize strong protections.

Florida's weak, outdated water protections put people at risk every time they eat local seafood or drink water. Updating these standards is critical to protect public health, anglers, and our way of life.

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