

Section 507: Appropriations Bill Rider Designed to Stop Federal Regulation of Forever Chemicals (PFAS) in Sewage Sludge Must be Rejected

1. **What is sewage sludge?** It is the solid matter produced by sewage treatment plants, which contains a mix of waste products from homes and industrial sites, including PFAS and other chemicals and pharmaceuticals. It has been renamed 'biosolids.'
2. About 35 years ago EPA began allowing the "land application" of sewage sludge as a fertilizer on farmlands, forests, gardens, etc., with runoff into water systems. According to the NY Times, **it has been spread on about 70 million acres of US farmland.**
3. EPA regulates pathogens and 9 heavy metals like lead, cadmium and mercury in biosolids, **but has not set limits for other chemical contaminants that accumulate in sewage and wastewater**, particularly PFAS.
4. Due to high levels of PFAS in dairy products and meat produced on contaminated farms, **Maine and Connecticut have banned the land application of sludge**, and other states are considering it.
5. **The EPA is Congressionally mandated to investigate the potential health risks of this practice.** The land application of sewage sludge is regulated by federal law under Chapter 40 Part 503 of the Code of Federal Regulations ([40 CFR 503, also called the Part 503 Sludge Rule](#)). The EPA is required to:
 - *"Establish numerical limits and management practices that protect public health and the environment from the reasonably anticipated adverse effects of toxic pollutants in sewage sludge.*
 - *Periodically review existing regulations for the purpose of identifying additional toxic pollutants that may be present in sewage sludge and assesses whether those pollutants may adversely affect public health or the environment based on their toxicity, persistence, concentration, mobility, and potential for exposure."*
6. EPA finally complied with this Congressional mandate and studied PFAS in sewage sludge, **issuing its [draft report on January 15, 2025](#)**. The report acknowledged many adverse health effects from PFAS and found it a likely carcinogen.
7. Before the report could be finalized and used to make policy, **in July 2025 Section 507 appeared in the Interior and Environment Appropriations bills in the House and Senate. It was passed by both committees and will soon be voted on by both houses of Congress.**
8. Section 507 would restrict the federal government from spending any funds to finalize this draft report or use it in any way to affect federal policy on sewage sludge. **It has the effect of nullifying Congress' earlier requirement that EPA establish regulations and limits for toxic pollutants in sewage sludge.**
9. **Do members of Congress really want to pass Section 507 and override their earlier mandate to the EPA?** This is the language of Section 507:

"None of the funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to finalize, implement, administer, or enforce the draft risk assessment, titled "Draft Sewage Sludge Risk Assessment for PFOA and PFOS published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register on January 15, 2025."