

## Viewpoint: Deception and dirty politics are behind targeting of PFAS



With allied epidemiologists placed inside the US Environmental Protection Agency, and scientists pushed to the side, environmentalists feel like they are about to get a win when it comes to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that have been common for 80 years.

And it will be a win – for the yacht payments of their lawyers. For the public, we will be no safer, we're not being harmed now, but the costs to 'clean up' a problem we don't have will be onerous. And we're all going to be harmed by that.

Maybe you instead buy into the populist rhetoric of environmentalists who claim they will 'make corporations pay', and there will be some cosmic jury award in a San Francisco court – Frisco has long hated science, from vaccines to cell phones, but also hates Happy Meals and golf – but that will only happen because a jury trial does not involve science. It is an emotional plea and attorneys for corporations know they will lose those and then [get it knocked down to peanuts](#) or thrown out on appeal. In Appellate Court, science matters, which is why a supernatural 'weedkiller causes human cancer' award got chopped to nothing on appeal. Judges reading scientific evidence saw that plants were not tiny green people and the biological mechanism glyphosate acts on in plants does not exist in humans. [Farm workers show no more cancers than anyone else despite using it often](#) so it was impossible a guy using it once a month got cancer from it.



To environmental lawyers, green is green, if that money is a prearranged sue-and-settle arrangement with the Biden administration, that is fine. But municipal governments who saw armed federal agents, at the request of the EPA, enforcing a Waters of the United States expansion that was never made into law, going Gestapo in their communities, are right to be in a panic that during an election year he will do the

same cultural carpet bombing about PFAS and water – and they do not want to be stuck with the bill.

It has happened before. During the Obama administration, [a sue-and-settle arrangement weirdly declared water a pollutant](#) – and therefore too much of it was bad for a river – and then tried to stick the county government with the bill. For \$500,000,000. It was one of few times that Republican and Democrats banded together to protest both the lack of science and the heavy-handed treatment of constituents by centralized government.



[Municipal governments and their trade groups are striking first.](#) They know that making corporations ‘pay’ when no science can show they have done harm will not work, but by wrapping themselves in the flag of supporting penalties for trace PFAS levels they may achieve their real goal; which is *getting themselves exempted* from any responsibility under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

It is ironic that governments say they are there to protect us but immediately want themselves exempt from any accountability if the public are convinced by environmentalists they have failed in that job.

It is certainly predictable politics, though.

Hank Campbell founded Science 2.0 in 2006, and writes for USA Today, Wall Street Journal, CNN, and more. His first book, *Science Left Behind*, was the #1 bestseller on Amazon for environmental policy books. Follow Hank on Twitter [@HankCampbell](#)

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