Meet the Annihilator: Could this technology rid the environment of PFAS 'forever chemicals'?

The quest to reduce the amount of PFAS in the environment is what led me to an industrial park in a southern suburb of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The jar of PFAS concentrate in my hand is part of a demonstration arranged by my hosts, Revive Environmental, during a tour of the company's PFAS destruction site, one of the first in the country to operate commercially and at scale. A few yards in front of me sits the company's PFAS "Annihilator" in a white shipping container.

The Annihilator represents just one of several technologies now vying to break down and destroy PFAS. These span the gamut from established processes like electrochemical oxidation and supercritical water oxidation to emerging techniques relying on ultraviolet light, plasma, ultrasound, or catalyst-driven thermal processes.

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Revive's Annihilator and other nascent destruction technologies show the first signs of promise that these "forever chemicals" can be removed from the environment permanently, limiting further human exposure and risk. But destroying PFAS is only one step in the full remediation process. Across the globe, researchers are developing new technologies and techniques to better understand, test, and track the chemicals—as well as identifying alternative materials—to eliminate PFAS for good.

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