

## **The French government is responsible for the PFAS disaster: organizations and local residents take the matter to court**

**Joint press release issued by Générations Futures, Notre Affaire à Tous, and BLOOM Association**

*May 21, 2026*

**The organizations Générations Futures, Notre Affaire à Tous, and BLOOM, along with residents of contaminated hot spots, represented by Lawyer Antoine Clerc, are suing the government in the Paris Administrative Court to hold it accountable for the PFAS scandal.**

**Our research shows that the government has been aware of the risks associated with PFAS and the contamination of French territory for over fifteen years.** While the toxicity of PFAS has been known to the manufacturers who have been producing them since the 1960s, the general public only became aware in the late 1990s in the United States. As early as the 2000s, international and European institutions began addressing the issue by regulating the first molecules and conducting initial studies. According to our research, in France, it was in 2008 that national institutions began to take notice of the issue: early reports from the French Parliament or public agencies warned of the risks associated with PFAS and the contamination of the national territory. The first hotspots, such as the French Chemical Valley in Lyon, were explicitly identified, yet it was not until ten years later that the residents of these areas began to learn of the scandal.

**Through this legal case, our organizations and the affected residents are denouncing the fact that for over fifteen years, government officials have been aware of this contamination and have failed to implement sufficient measures to prevent it. They are thus partly responsible for the tragedy of the widespread contamination of the French territory and of our bodies. The government has indeed failed in its primary mission to protect its citizens. It chose not to regulate activities that are sources of PFAS emissions within the country, and only informed the public after the PFAS scandal broke in May 2022, following the release of a [journalistic investigation](#) by *Vert de Rage*. Even since then, its actions have fallen far short of what is necessary to protect us, namely, organizing the cessation of emissions of these toxic pollutants, as well as the decontamination of our environment and consequently of our bodies, which are already too heavily contaminated. At both a national and local level: the monitoring of the environment, food, and drinking water remains insufficient; industrial emissions are still possible and poorly regulated; and epidemiological studies for the most affected populations are nonexistent. All of this constitutes a serious legal failure, a breach of numerous legal obligations incumbent upon the French state - aimed in particular at preserving the ecological integrity of the environment and the health of citizens - and may thus give rise to its liability. Yet the State is effectively the only entity capable of protecting us from the growing pollution generated by the chemical industry.**

The consequence of this failure includes widespread contamination of ecosystems causing national ecological harm, the deterioration of the health of French citizens, and the violation

of numerous human rights of those most exposed<sup>1</sup>, as well as colossal environmental and health costs which are estimated at hundreds of billions of euros over several decades.

**We are therefore asking the Paris Administrative Court to order the State to cease all PFAS discharges into the environment as quickly as possible and to immediately implement “polluter pays” mechanisms to cover the colossal environmental and health costs of this pollution.** Our organizations have officially submitted a request to ANSES and *Santé Publique France* (French public agencies) to commission an institutional study determining the environmental and health costs of PFAS for France. We also demand that the numerous impacts, including anxiety-related harm suffered by residents most affected by the pollution, including the six individual plaintiffs bringing the lawsuit alongside our organizations, be recognized.

According to Pauline Cervan, toxicologist and scientific director at Générations Futures: *“The government’s inaction on PFAS is all the more serious given that scientific knowledge regarding the ubiquity of PFAS in the environment and their toxicity has been available for many years - and regarding PFOS and PFOA, since before 2010. With this lawsuit, we aim to highlight the need to better integrate scientific data, particularly academic research, into public decision-making.”*

According to Jérémie Suissa, Executive Director of Notre Affaire à Tous: *“While industries were the first targets of legal actions related to PFAS, public authorities have the duty and the power to regulate these economic activities and their impacts in order to protect the public. This action should spark a genuine public debate on the State’s role in addressing pollution: can the State continue to systematically prioritize economic interests at the expense of protecting public health and the environment?”*

According to Aymeric Thillaye du Boullay, Legal Director at BLOOM Association: *“The culpable inaction of public authorities results in widespread harm that must be identified, stopped, and remedied. As we observe a significant increase in environmental and health threats, the State must assume its primary responsibilities regarding health protection so that the issue of PFAS is addressed in a manner consistent with the urgency it demands.”*

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<sup>1</sup> As recognized by United Nations experts: <https://notreaffaireatous.org/pfas-les-experts-de-lonu-epinglent-letat-francais-ainsi-que-deux-entreprises-chimiques-pour-les-violations-des-droits-humains-des-habitants-de-la-vallee-de-la-chimie/>