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GARBAGE JUICE ON THE LOOSE: An environmental advocacy group says New York needs to improve its proposed first-in-the-nation rules to handle landfill runoff.

New York River Watch found in a [new report released Thursday](#) that closed and operating landfills in the state send roughly 500 million gallons of "landfill leachate" to municipal waste treatment plants annually. That leachate may contain toxic chemicals that aren't treated by the plants and are then dumped into the state's waterways, including drinking water sources, the group warned.

"Leachate is created when rainwater moves through everything that we throw away and that ends up in a landfill, and as that water moves through the waste at a landfill that's buried, it picks up all of these chemicals," said Rebecca Martin, the group's co-founder.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation on July 1 [proposed new rules for active landfills](#) that would require the treatment of leachate before delivery to wastewater treatment plants. This would make New York the first in the nation to require this step, the agency said.

"This proposed rulemaking enhances the significant work DEC is undertaking to reduce PFAS in our environment to maximize new technologies now available that effectively remove landfill pollutants for proper disposal and further reduce potential impacts to the public and the environment," DEC Commissioner Amanda Lefton said.

But New York River Watch's leaders say that the rule doesn't go far enough and that questions remain unanswered about how the rules will impact environmental justice communities and those already concerned about nearby landfills.

"The regulations have got to require treatment standards that actually remove contaminants, all of them, before discharging, not some of them," Martin said.

The group wants more time to weigh in on the proposal, as well, calling on DEC to extend the comment deadline by 30 days to Oct. 9.
— Marie J. French

