New Zealand—First Country to Ban PFAS in Cosmetics

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February 29, 2024

Starting in 2027, the New Zealand Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will ban the use of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in cosmetic products.

PFAS can be used in cosmetic products to smooth the skin or to make the cosmetic more durable, spreadable and water resistant. They are sometimes used in foundation, nail polish, shaving cream, lipstick and mascara.

The ban will be accomplished in various steps:

+ From December 31, 2026, the import or manufacturing of cosmetics containing PFAS will be prohibited in New Zealand
+ From December 31, 2027, selling or supplying cosmetics containing PFAS within the country will be banned
+ By June 30, 2028, all PFAS-containing cosmetic products will need to have been disposed of

The New Zealand EPA publicly consulted on the rule changes in 2023 and received 20 submissions, including 14 from the cosmetics industry.

Notably, this is a trend for cosmetics in the US as well. California was the first major jurisdiction to ban all PFAS in cosmetics, in September 2022, with a transitional period for enforcement after January 2025. Additionally, Maine and Minnesota recently passed a law prohibiting products made with intentionally added PFAS chemicals from 2030.

The European Union is working on a broader ban on the chemicals. Remaining vigilant about emerging regulatory requirements and anticipating future industry developments is crucial for companies' sustainability and compliance.

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