

# The Facts

## RADIUM



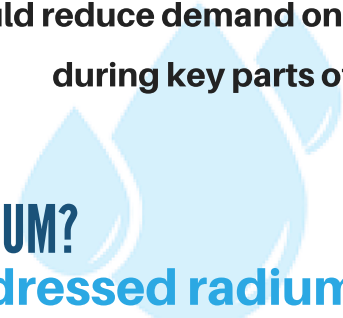
### WHAT IS RADIUM?

Radium is a **naturally occurring** carcinogenic element found in rock formations, particularly the bedrock that lines many deep aquifers across the country. For this reason, radium is often found in groundwater and many public water supplies. The federal Safe Drinking Water Act has required communities to **monitor** for radium and report findings to customers since the **early 1980's**. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) did not begin **enforcing** the federal radium standard in Wisconsin until **2003**.



### HOW CAN WAUKESHA DEAL WITH RADIUM RIGHT NOW?

**Treatment technologies** would reduce the amount of radium pumped into Waukesha's drinking water supply system in the first place while targeted **conservation and efficiency** measures would reduce demand on key wells during key parts of the year.



### WHAT HAVE OTHER COMMUNITIES DONE TO DEAL WITH RADIUM?

Communities throughout Wisconsin have **successfully addressed radium** contamination in more than **76 public water supplies** without diverting Great Lakes water. **46 of those communities** used one or more **treatment options** to remove radium from their water supplies. Waukesha only analyzed reverse osmosis as an "alternative" to Great Lakes water, which happens to be one of the most expensive treatment methods available. The **vast majority** of Wisconsin water utilities that have **made good-faith efforts** to reduce radium in their drinking water supply using treatment. **Waukesha has not** meaningfully explored treatment options, which would provide for a healthy and ample drinking water supply at a fraction of the cost.

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## WHEN AND HOW OFTEN DOES WAUKESHA NOT MEET THE RADIUM STANDARD?

For **most of the year**, Waukesha **meets the radium standard** by blending the water it pumps from the deep aquifer with the water it pumps from the shallow aquifer. Blending lowers the concentration of radium in the water even before it enters the city's water distribution system. Radium **levels vary** throughout the year in Waukesha, but frequently **increase in July and August** due to high demand for watering (e.g., lawns and golf courses).

## WAUKESHA OPPOSED CURRENT RADIUM SAFETY STANDARDS.

When ordered to comply with the radium standard for safe drinking water, instead of reducing risk to public health, Waukesha commissioned and submitted a study to the EPA **requesting** the national radium standard be set at **4 times** the standard initially established by the EPA **for safe drinking water**, claiming public health concerns were minimal.

## WAUKESHA HAS REPEATEDLY REFUSED TO WORK WITH THE WDNR TO MEET FEDERAL RADIUM STANDARDS.

Even after a three-year extension (initially provided in 2006 to all Wisconsin communities dealing with radium contamination), **Waukesha refused to comply** with the WDNR to meet the drinking water standard for radium until the **Wisconsin Department of Justice took legal action**. Waukesha did not settle until 2009 and is under a court order to comply with the radium standard by June 2018. **More than 30 other** Wisconsin communities in violation of the radium standard in 2006 **agreed to comply** by working with the WDNR to take meaningful steps toward reducing the radium levels found in their water supplies.