

3M to Invest More Than \$160 Million in Belgium Plant Remediation >MMM

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- By Colin Kellaher

3M Co. on Wednesday said it is investing an additional 150 million euros (\$166.3 million) in efforts to remediate contaminations from toxic chemicals at and near a plant in Belgium.

The St. Paul, Minn., manufacturing conglomerate said the investment is aimed at advancing remedial actions for the Zwijndrecht community near the city of Antwerp to address legacy manufacturing and disposal of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

PFAS are commonly called "forever chemicals" because they take so long to break down. The toxic family of chemicals has made its way into drinking water and food supplies around the world through a range of sources, including industrial operations, food packaging and firefighting foam.

3M last year idled some production at the Zwijndrecht plant after the Flemish environmental agency issued a safety measure barring emissions of the toxic chemicals from the facility. The company had appealed the decision, but Belgian authorities earlier this month rejected the appeal and finalized stricter PFAS pollution standards, keeping the plant partially idled.

3M on Wednesday said it continues to operate non-PFAS related manufacturing at the Zwijndrecht plant while it works to get more PFAS-enabled manufacturing processes up and running in compliance with local safety measures.

The company said it has accelerated certain remedial timelines and actions related to the plant, and that it estimates costs associated with initial actions at EUR150 million, adding that it expects to record a related charge in the first quarter.

Write to Colin Kellaher at colin.kellaher@wsj.com