



Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Testimony on: SB225 “Environment-Publicly-Owned Treatment Works-
PFAS Monitoring”**

Position: Support

Hearing Date: February 9, 2023

Pat Elder

Wastewater treatment facilities at the following five locations are contaminating surface water and poisoning aquatic life with high levels of PFAS contamination:

- Piscataway Creek
- Town of Chesapeake Beach
- Naval Research Laboratory – Chesapeake Bay Detachment
- Fort George Meade
- Patuxent River NAS

We must stop PFAS compounds – especially PFOS - from entering our surface waters.

WSSC’s Piscataway WWTP



Landing a huge catfish from Piscataway Creek.

In 2021 the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) reported that 74 parts per trillion (ppt) of PFOS were detected in the tidal portion of Piscataway Creek not far from the point where the WSSC Piscataway Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges effluent into the Potomac River. The MDE also reported that the filet of a Largemouth Bass was found to contain 94,200 ppt of PFOS in the tidal portion of Piscataway Creek. [MDE – See Table 6.](#)

PFOS bioaccumulates in fish by factors that are thousands of times ambient water levels. Ask your counterparts in Minnesota. They've set limits of .05 ppt for PFOS in some lakes. Many states are ahead of Maryland in this regard.

The concentration of this deadly carcinogen in the popular sport fish is alarming. The EPA advises us not to consume water with concentrations of PFOS above .02 ppt. The levels in the fish are 4,710,000 times higher than this threshold.

MDE found that there were no environmental justice implications regarding the poisoned fish, but I have spoken to several African American men who regularly fish and consume fish from the creek.

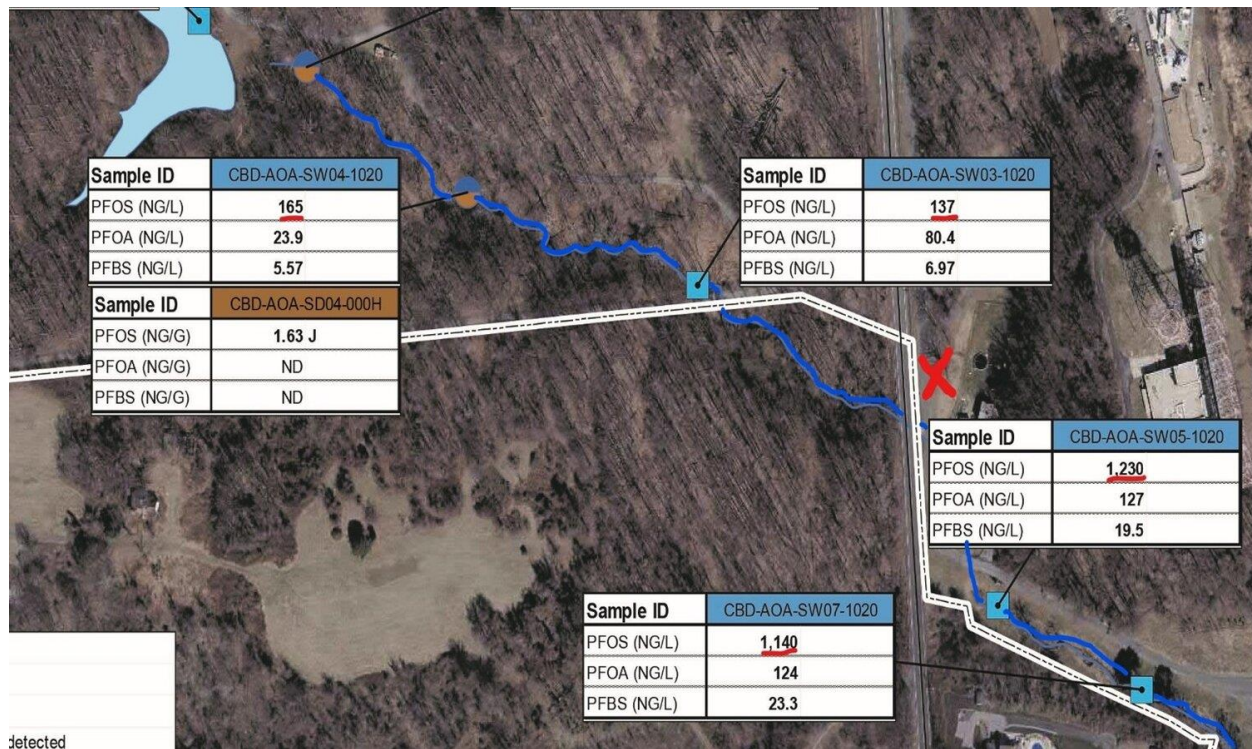
The Town of Chesapeake Beach



Preparing rock fish at the Rod “N” Reel in Chesapeake Beach, Maryland

On 6/10/21 the Town of Chesapeake Beach [tested its wastewater](#) being discharged into the Chesapeake Bay and found total PFAS at 506.9 ppt., including 11 ppt of PFOA and 3.2 ppt of PFOS. Hold the thought.

Naval Research Laboratory – Chesapeake Bay Detachment, Chesapeake Beach



A stream at the Naval Research Lab in Maryland picks up contaminants as it courses by the WWTP. The red X shows the location of the treatment plant.

See the [Restoration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes](#) Naval Research Laboratory – Chesapeake Bay Detachment, May 18, 2021 -

During a Restoration Advisory Board meeting on May 18, 2021, the Navy displayed a graphic that showed levels of PFOS and PFOA at various locations in a stream that travelled from the fire training area on base to the Chesapeake Bay. Predictably, the levels of the toxins diminish as the stream moves away from the scene of the crime. The levels of PFOS dropped to 137 ppt before the stream passed by the outfall of the WWTP on base. Then, the PFOS levels spiked to 1,230 ppt as the stream passed by the WWTP, just a few hundred feet before emptying into the bay.

I tested the water as it coursed through the sand and into the bay and found 6,058 of total PFAS and [3,295 ppt of PFOS](#). You just can't make this stuff up. I used a simple water test kit by Cyclopure, a firm the DOD uses.

Although much of the focus of PFAS being used on military bases centers on the firefighting foams, the toxins are also used in engine cleaning, wire coating, and chrome plating and they're flushed into sewer drains. You must stop it. It's my Maryland too.

*In 2021 the Town of Chesapeake Beach tested oysters, perch, and rock fish for PFAS:
(in ppt)*

Species	PFOS	PFOA	Total PFAS
Oyster	470	180	1,060
Perch	7,400	210	9,470
Rockfish	1,200	260	2,450

Oyster Report

https://www.chesapeakebeachmd.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf4261/f/uploads/j47218-1_uds_level_2_report_final_report_1.pdf

Source, Rockfish and Perch Report

https://www.chesapeakebeachmd.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf4261/f/uploads/j47211-1_uds_level_2_report_final_report_1.pdf

The EPA has set an advisory for PFOA in drinking water at .004 ppt, meaning that the levels in rockfish are 65,000 over that limit. We're in trouble.

Fort Meade



PFAS foam at a beaver pond on the Little Patuxent River.

I tested water in the Little Patuxent River just a few thousand feet downstream from two wastewater treatment plants and found 1,250 ppt of PFOS, 30 ppt of PFOA, and 2,306 ppt of total PFAS. See [Cyclopure November 17, 2021.pdf](#)

American Water Operations and Maintenance, LLC is the owner and operator of the Fort Meade Wastewater Treatment Plant, while Howard County's Little Patuxent River Wastewater Reclamation Plant is just 100 yards downstream from the Army's discharge.

Who knows who is most responsible for the pollution? This debate underscores the importance of this legislation. After I published my results, American Water was quick to point out the existence of the county's WWTP downstream! "It's not just us," they said."

Patuxent River NAS



Having fun at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Air Expo 2018.

In May, 2021 an accident at Patuxent River Naval Air Station in St. Mary's County sent 2,500 gallons of PFAS foam into the county's Marlay Taylor Water Reclamation Facility. The Navy said the foam it sent down the drain is safe. The county's wastewater director said the foam was sent, untreated, two miles into the bay. [See my interview with George Erichsen, Director, St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission.](#)

Pax River, as it's known down here, has had numerous accidents of overhead foam systems that have repeatedly sent thousands of gallons of the carcinogens into the heart of the bay. DOD firefighting solutions have been shown to contain [concentrations of PFOS of 9.5 billion ppt.](#) They use lesser carcinogens these days, but these chemicals are killers, too.

You've got to do something about this. Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant should not eat seafood from Maryland waters until they are proven to be safe.