



Sunrise Movement Maryland

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Testimony on: SB195 - PFAS Protection Act
Organization: Sunrise Movement Maryland (representing 7 hubs)
Person
Submitting: Stephen J Leas, Political Lead
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: January 28, 2021

Position: **Favorable**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB195. Sunrise Movement Maryland is a coalition of seven Sunrise hubs (and growing) across the state of Maryland, including Silver Spring, Einstein, Rockville, Frederick, Howard County, McDaniel, and Baltimore. We are a youth led movement fighting for a Green New Deal that addresses the climate crisis on the scale that science demands, creates enough jobs in the green economy for all who need them, and addresses historical injustices in the process. We support SB195, the Environment – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions and Requirements.

Why PFAS need to be regulated:

PFAS chemicals don't break down in the environment, earning them the nickname "forever chemicals." These are carcinogenic chemicals that build up in our bodies over time, a dangerous and potentially lethal combination. In Maryland, we know there is contamination in drinking water and near many military bases, including right here in Annapolis.¹ This Maryland State legislative session, we have an opportunity to act on this imminent and immediate [public health threat](#). We must act now to turn off the tap to these forever chemicals and treat them like the hazardous materials they are. We must regulate the continued introduction of PFAS into our state's drinking water and seafood.

¹ Environmental Working Group map of PFAS Contamination, https://www.ewg.org/interactive-maps/2019_pfas_contamination/map/



As explained in the *Bay Journal*, “In the six-state Chesapeake Bay watershed, there are at least 18 sites where PFAS have been detected. That could mean that relatively few industrial facilities in the region have made or used PFAS — or it may mean that no one’s looked very hard.”²

PFAS are still widespread in both production and use. Safeguarding against PFAS chemicals as a class is the best way to protect human health. Trying to regulate one chemical at a time will only leave us in an endless game of whack-a-mole. Marylanders deserve the same public health protections from PFAS that we see in other states. Maryland firefighters shouldn’t have to suffer from exposure to toxic chemicals, especially when there are safer alternatives.

What’s in the bill:

- Turns off the tap on new contamination: stops the use of PFAS in firefighting foam (like [WA](#), [NH](#), [CA](#)), food packaging (like [NY](#), [WA](#), [ME](#)), and in rugs and carpets. **In all of these areas there are safer alternatives to PFAS.**
- Protects our air and water by banning the mass disposal of these chemicals by incineration ([NY](#)) and landfilling ([CA](#)).

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this important legislation.

² Chesapeake states grapple with ‘forever chemical’ contaminating drinking water, *Bay Journal*, July 15, 2019, https://www.bayjournal.com/article/watershed_states_grapple_with_forever_chemical_contaminating_drinking_water