



**SB195: Environment – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions and Requirements
PFAS PROTECTION ACT
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
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FAVORABLE

Waterkeepers Chesapeake fights for clean water and a healthy environment by supporting Waterkeepers throughout the Chesapeake and coastal regions as they protect their communities, rivers, and streams from pollution. Waterkeepers Chesapeake has 17 Waterkeeper program members, representing thousands of residents in Maryland and the region.

Waterkeepers Chesapeake supports SB 195 to restrict the use and disposal of products that contain PFAS compounds. PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) is a class of over 9000 man-made chemical compounds that are used in various products from stain resistant carpets to food packaging materials commonly used in fast food chains, and firefighting foams used at airports and firefighting training grounds across Maryland and throughout the world. PFAS persist in the environment and in the human body, earning them the nickname “forever chemicals.” They are linked to cancer, hormone disruption, immune suppression, and reproductive problems. A CDC survey found PFAS in the blood of 97% of the participants. Unfortunately, EPA has yet to fully acknowledge the toxicity of all PFAS chemicals to humans nor has EPA issued toxicity standards; therefore, it is left up to states to protect their citizens from exposure of PFAS pollutants. SB 195 is a necessary first step in our fight against this public health risk.

What does this bill do?

- Stops the use of firefighting foam containing PFAS (Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF)).
- Stops the use of food packaging products that contain PFAS.
- Stops the use of rugs and carpets that have PFAS in the product.
- Protects our air and water from the mass disposal of these products by incineration or landfill.

Why is this bill needed?

- Protects thousands of first responders in Maryland from the direct exposure of PFAS chemicals at 222 airports and over 900 fire departments. PFAS-free firefighting foams have been developed and are being used in many states.

- PFAS chemicals have been detected in surface water, groundwater, treated wastewater from sewage treatment plants and drinking water in Maryland. MDE is assessing public health risks from PFAS, but more must be done. This bill will protect public health by addressing sources of PFAS directly.
- Sampling of fish and water in Antietam Creek by Upper Potomac Riverkeeper showed incredibly high concentrations of PFAS in smallmouth bass. The level of the chemical in the Antietam Creek smallmouth bass plasma, tested in 2018, was at a minimum of 250,000 parts per trillion (PPT) while the EPA guidance for drinking water is 70 ppt. (<https://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/troubling-findings-of-forever-chemicals-in-antietam-creek/>)
- Several articles in the Bay Journal chronicle how PFAS has been found in Maryland's fish and oysters, waterways, and drinking water. (<https://www.bayjournal.com/search/?l=25&sort=relevance&f=html&t=article%2Cvideo%2Cyoutube%2Ccollection&app=editorial&nsa=eedition&q=pfas>)
- The Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry is conducting a nation-wide exposure assessment in PFAS in hotspot communities. This exposure assessment takes into account an individual's in-home exposure from toxic PFAS particles from carpets and furniture material. Major carpet retailers and textile companies are moving away from PFAS in their products, but not fast enough.
- PFAS chemicals are used in the packaging of foods from fast food restaurants to products in our grocery stores. PFAS compounds are used as a waterproofing in these products and can directly contaminate our food. McDonalds has recently announced the elimination of PFAS in all food packaging worldwide by 2025.
- When PFAS chemicals are incinerated, they pollute the air of surrounding communities because PFAS is not destroyed by incineration.
- When PFAS chemicals are landfilled, they can leach into our groundwater, putting our drinking water further at risk.
- The EPA has known of the environmental and human risk to our health for over 30 years and has been slow to respond with appropriate measures. It is up to each state's regulatory and legislative actions to properly protect its citizens.

What are the health risks of PFAS?

- Increased risk of kidney and testicular cancer.
- Hormone disruption and immune suppression.
- Reproductive deformities.
- Liver disease.
- Elevated cholesterol.
- Cancer.

Waterkeepers Chesapeake urges a favorable report.

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