



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

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, or PEER, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting our environment and civil servants who safeguard it.

We support SB195 to restrict the use and disposal of PFAS chemicals. Prohibiting PFAS in firefighting foam, food packaging, and in rugs and carpets is necessary to protect our health and the environment. High levels of PFAS contamination are associated with suppressed immune function, thyroid disease, testicular and kidney disease, cancers, and liver damage.ⁱ Additionally, high levels of PFAS may decrease the effectiveness of the body to respond to vaccines or create a more severe reaction to COVID-19.ⁱⁱ Unless we act now, the problems associated with contamination will grow exponentially worse as PFAS build up in the environment.

Restricting PFAS as a class of chemicals, rather than individually, is essential to avoid a chemical whack-a-mole. The traditional approach of managing each chemical individually fails because the chemical industry routinely replaces old compounds with new PFAS that are just as toxic. The physicochemical, environmental, and toxicological properties of PFAS mean that PFAS all have a high persistence, accumulation potential, and similar known and potential hazards.ⁱⁱⁱ Restriction as a class in firefighting foam, food packaging, and rugs and carpets will help protect children and families from toxic chemicals while holding polluters accountable.

Maryland must take control as the Federal government has ignored PFAS contamination. The EPA does not regulate the more than 9,000 different types of PFAS.^{iv} The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) investigates chemicals only after reports of harm. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) does not require manufacturers to disclose inert ingredients in their products. Neither the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) nor the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) consider PFAS hazardous. Maryland must fill this void by restricting the use and disposal of PFAS through SB 195.

Therefore, the only way we can guarantee the safety of our environment, our children, and ourselves is to stop PFAS at their source.

Thank you.

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ⁱ <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/Toxfaqs/TF.asp?id=1116&tid=237>

ⁱⁱ <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.10.22.20217562>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.estlett.0c00255>

^{iv} https://comptox.epa.gov/dashboard/chemical_lists/pfasmaster