

January 26, 2021

Testimony on SB 195
PFAS Protection Act
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Position: Favorable

As a member of the youth led Sunrise Movement and Maryland Resident, I 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.

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.

Why I support this bill:

Chemicals in our waterways will inevitably impact all of us and the control of them are out of the hands of the people being effected. This legislation will put power back into the hands of the people. I am worried about the water my animals will be able to drink. I'm worried about staying in Maryland to raise a family and not knowing if it's safe for me and my loved ones to play in the water. I want to feel safe in my beautiful state. The natural world deserves to be free of

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

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

chemicals and unhindered to perform it's already complex natural processes that care for us constantly. Companies are just making nature's job harder, your job harder to protect the people, and my job as a citizen harder to keep myself safe and healthy.

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.