



UPPER POTOMAC
RIVERKEEPER®

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January 29, 2021

HB22: Environment – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions and Requirements PFAS PROTECTION ACT

Health and Government Operations

February 2, 2021

Brent Walls, Upper Potomac Riverkeeper

FAVORABLE

Potomac Riverkeeper Network: Our mission is to protect the public's right to clean water in the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers and their tributaries. We stop pollution to enhance the safety of our drinking water, protect healthy river habitats, and enhance public use and enjoyment.

Potomac Riverkeeper Network and the organizations below support SB 195 to restrict the use and disposal of products that contain PFAS compounds. PFAS is a class of over 9000 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. 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 the States to protect its citizens from exposure of PFAS pollutants. SB 195 is a necessary first step in our fight against this new 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 or air and water from the mass disposal of these products by incineration or landfill.

Why is this bill needed?

- Protects our 1000's 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.



Potomac Riverkeeper Network is trade name of Potomac Riverkeeper, Inc., a 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization.
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- PFAS chemicals have been detected in surface water, groundwater, treated wastewater from sewage treatment plants and drinking water in Maryland. MDE is slowly taking action to assess public health risks from PFAS, but more must be done. This bill will protect public health by addressing sources of PFAS directly.
- [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 which directly contaminates 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 burning.
- 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 have 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.

Potomac Riverkeeper Network urges a favorable report.

Brent Walls,
Upper Potomac Riverkeeper