



January 29, 2021

Testimony on HB0022
Environment - PFAS Chemicals - Prohibitions and Requirements
Health and Government Operations

Position: Favorable

The Sunrise Movement Maryland Coalition, a youth-led grassroots organization representing members in Silver Spring, Einstein, Rockville, Frederick, Howard County, McDaniel, Baltimore and more, supports HB0022, Environment – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions and Requirements.

Why PFAS must be regulated:

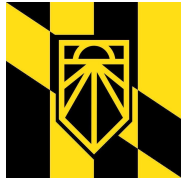
PFAS chemicals don't break down in the environment, earning them the nickname "forever chemicals." These are carcinogenic chemicals that build up in our bodies over time, a dangerous and potentially lethal combination. In Maryland, we know there is contamination in drinking water and near many military 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.

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



The youth support this bill:

As young people fighting for a more just, equitable and healthy Maryland, we urge you to endorse this PFAS Protection Act. In a state which has played such an influential role in this nation's rich democratic history, you must be proactive in not letting corporations run rampant over the safety of your constituents. We must treat PFAS as the hazardous chemicals that they are. We must prevent them from building up further in our environment and in our blood. We must pass this public safety protection against PFAS.

As inheritors and the future stewards of this state, youth support to protect and limit man-made impact on the environment is overwhelming. Sunrise Movement is a youth-led grassroots organization fighting for such policies and we urge you to take this small step in preventing further damage to our food and water supply.

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.