



January 29, 2021

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

Position: Favorable

As a 17 year-old member of the youth led Sunrise Movement and Maryland Resident, I support HB0022, 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:

Maryland, as one of the wealthiest states in the country, holds the responsibility to fix its pollution that harms its residents. We, as citizens of the world, hold the responsibility to protect

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



our planet and stop pollution. Banning incineration of PFAS is a step in the right direction to do that.

As a high schooler in Maryland, I don't want to grow up in a world where the air contains dangerous chemicals-- but that may be the future we see. One of my closest friends wants to volunteer as a firefighter, and I don't want to see him use foam that degrades the environment. But more importantly, I couldn't bear to see him lose his life or waste it away in a hospital because the State failed to act. This bill presents an opportunity to move to a cleaner, safer future. You simply must pass it.

Opponents of this bill may say that PFAS chemicals are necessary to produce cheap, effective fire fighting foam, food packaging, and rugs/carpets. However, this is simply not true; an alternative does exist in all of those areas.

We have a moral responsibility to ban the dangerous and polluting chemical for good. Fortunately, we see a clear path in that direction in this very assembly.

Please support House Bill 22.

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.