

Testimony: SB 956: Protecting State Waters From PFAS Pollution (Protecting State Waters From PFAS Pollution Act)

Submitted to: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Submitted by: Diana Eignor, MS, Environmental Consultant

Position: In Support

February 19, 2024

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SB 956: Protecting State Waters From PFAS Pollution**. My name is Diana Eignor. I am a biologist/toxicologist and retired EPA scientist from the Office of Water.

Importance of Controlling PFAS Pollution

- **PFAS pollutants are known as “forever chemicals”** because they are long-lasting and found in humans, water, air, soil, fish and wildlife. Ongoing research indicates that exposure to PFAS pollutants poses health risks to humans and environmental risks to aquatic and terrestrial organisms. Preventing additional PFAS contamination is integral for our state to safeguard public health, preserve our environment, and ensure the economic vitality of our state.
- **SB 956: Protecting State Waters from PFAS Pollution will decrease the amount of PFAS pollution entering Maryland’s waters.** This bill requires monitoring of PFAS from industrial users who discharge into publicly owned treatment works. The development of a discharge limit will be included in their pretreatment permit issued either by the Maryland Department of the Environment, or the publicly owned treatment works that receive the industrial discharge.
- **This bill is literally stopping PFAS pollution “at the source and discharge pipe”.** If PFAS is not removed until it reaches drinking water systems, wastewater treatment, and surface waters, the costs of remediation are expensive and fall on to the shoulders of the treatment plants and citizens who are rate payers for the systems. The industrial users who pollute our waters with PFAS should be held responsible for paying the costs of remediation.

EPA methods are available to measure PFAS

- **The EPA's Office of Water published Method 1633, "Analysis of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Aqueous, Solid, Biosolids, and Tissue Samples by LC-MS/MS" in January 2024.**
 - This is a method to **test for 40 PFAS compounds in wastewater, surface water, groundwater, soil, biosolids, sediment, landfill leachate, and fish tissue.**
 - This method can be used in various applications, including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.
 - The method will support NPDES implementation by providing a consistent PFAS method that has been tested in a wide variety of wastewaters and contains all the required quality control (QC) procedures for the Clean Water Act (CWA).
<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-01/method-1633-final-for-web-posting.pdf>
- **The EPA's Office of Water published Method 1621, "Determination of Adsorbable Organic Fluorine (AOF) in Aqueous Matrices by Combustion Ion Chromatography".**
 - This is a method to **measure the aggregate concentration of organofluorines** (molecules with a carbon-fluorine bond) in wastewater.
 - The strength of the method is that it can broadly screen for thousands of known PFAS compounds. According to EuroFins International, an internationally known chemistry laboratory, a typical sample costs \$350-\$400.
<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-01/method-1621-for-web-posting.pdf>

The Cost of Doing Nothing!

- **How much does it cost to remove PFAS from wastewater?**
 - According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's estimates, PFAS can be bought for \$50 - \$1,000 per pound and costs between \$2.7 million and \$18 million per pound to remove and destroy from municipal wastewater, depending on facility size. Source: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/news-and-stories/groundbreaking-study-shows-unaffordable-costs-of-pfas-cleanup-from-wastewater#:~:text=Unaffordability%20of%20PFAS%20cleanup%20from%20wastewater&text=PFAS%20can%20be%20bought%20for,wastewater%2C%20depending%20on%20facility%20size>
- **What do the wastewater estimates look like for the next 20 years?**
 - A recent study from Minnesota showed total wastewater costs to remove PFAS to be between \$14 and \$28 billion over 20 years in that state alone. Source: https://www.nacwa.org/docs/default-source/resources---public/water-coalition-fact-sheet-202307-v1-2.pdf?sfvrsn=8694c161_2/
- **You have to consider drinking water costs.**
 - Remediation efforts and PFAS removal strategies have cost states like North Carolina nearly \$49 million dollars with a recurring cost of \$2 million just to keep the reverse osmosis drinking water plant running. Source : The True Cost of PFAS and the Benefits of Acting Now, <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.1c03565>
- **What do the drinking water estimates look like for the next 20 years?**

- Drinking water utilities will need to invest more than \$50 billion to install and operate treatment technology over the next 20 years and add another \$3.5 billion per year in disposal costs for the water sector. Source: https://www.nacwa.org/docs/default-source/resources---public/water-coalition-fact-sheet-202307-v1-2.pdf?sfvrsn=8694c161_2/

Maryland residents deserve to see action to remove PFAS contamination in our state. Small cities like Thurmont and Elkton are experiencing PFAS in their drinking water at dangerous concentrations. The costs for PFAS filtration systems are in the multi-million dollar range.

I urge you to please pass this legislation, **SB 956: Protecting State Waters From PFAS Pollution.**

Sincerely,

Diana M. Eignor, MS