



SB956

**Environment – Water Pollution Control – Protecting State Waters From PFAS
Pollution (Protecting State Waters From PFAS Pollution Act)**

Testimony before the Education, Energy, and the Environment

Hearing February 20, 2024

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Peter Alexander, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of SB956**. We appreciate the leadership of Senator Hester for sponsoring this legislation.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS and “forever chemicals”, are a large class of more than 10,000 structurally-related compounds that are used in a variety of consumer products including everything from personal care products and non-stick pans to car seats and carpets. They are also used by industries to make things greaseproof and water resistant.

PFAS is everywhere – in our environment, our food and water, and in our bodies. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) found PFAS in 75% of drinking water it has tested. MDE has also issued food advisories for PFAS contamination from some Maryland waterways. PFAS contamination is a huge problem because these chemicals have been associated with human disease, including chronic kidney disease or kidney cancer, reduced antibody responses to vaccinations in both children and adults, increased risk of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, low birth weight and childhood obesity. The US EPA has proposed a maximum contamination limit of 4 ppt for several PFAS types but has stated that there is no safe level of PFAS in drinking water.

SB956 aligns with State authority under the Clean Water Act to restrict the discharge of toxic chemicals, including PFAS. It ensures large industries that knowingly use PFAS use modern filters to stop their discharge into waterways, stormwater, and to wastewater treatment plants, and sets a discharge limit of 4ppt for PFAS. It DOES NOT ban PFAS in industrial processes.

EPA allows states to restrict PFAS discharges under the Clean Water Act, and existing pollution control technology can capture roughly 99 percent of PFAS in wastewater. Safeguarding against PFAS chemicals as a class is the best way to protect human health. Let’s enact SB956.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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