

Protecting State Waters From PFAS Pollution Act

SB956/HB1153 Senator Hester and Delegate Love

PFAS are known as “forever chemicals” because they don’t break down in our bodies or the environment.



DID YOU KNOW? PFAS exposure has been linked to cancer and other severe health problems.

The threat of “forever chemicals”

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly known as PFAS, are used in a variety of products including rugs, food packaging, and non-stick pans. They are also used in a variety of industries to make things greaseproof and water resistant.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, there is [no safe level of some PFAS in drinking water](#) and exposure to PFAS chemicals, even in small amounts over time, has been linked to serious health effects including cancer, thyroid disruption and reduced vaccine response.

Firefighters, active military and their families, and children are most at risk of PFAS exposure, but everyone is at risk.

PFAS in Maryland

The Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) has found PFAS in the majority of water treatment plants they have tested. According to Maryland’s [PFAS Action Plan](#) 14% of Maryland industries that responded to a survey reported having PFAS sources on-site.

There is known contamination in and around [more than a dozen military sites](#) and in [seafood](#) in Maryland.

In 2022, the Maryland General Assembly passed the [George “Walter” Taylor Act](#), with broad bi-partisan support to restrict the use of PFAS in food packaging, rugs and carpets, and firefighting foam in Maryland.

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Protecting our communities

Until we can fully phase out the use of PFAS, we need to ensure that industries do not release these chemicals into our waterways.

Maryland should limit PFAS discharge into our waterways, sewage treatment plants and stormwater. Now is the time for the state to act.

According to a [2020 report from leading PFAS experts](#) PFAS should be regulated as a class in order to protect health:

“Managing PFAS one-by-one is neither feasible nor cost-efficient. More comprehensive solutions are needed, given that traditional approaches have failed to control widespread exposures to PFAS and resulted in inadequate public health protection. We suggest class-based options to more comprehensively and efficiently reduce PFAS exposure.”

What the bill does:

This bill, as amended, requires the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to:

- Identify and require testing and monitoring of discharge from some large industries that use PFAS;
- Require MDE, Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) and Significant Industrial Users (SIUs) to develop action levels and mitigation plans for addressing PFAS contamination; and,
- Require MDE to develop discharge limits for individual legacy PFAS and total PFAS for some large industries.