



Committee: Education, Energy and Environment

Testimony on: – SB686

Pesticides – PFAS Chemicals – Product Phase Outs and Registration Requirements

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 24

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility fully supports SB686 because it would prohibit manufacturers from selling, offering for sale, or distributing in the State, products intentionally containing a very dangerous and ubiquitous family of chemicals affecting the health of all humans from in utero to old age.

This is important to supporters of Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR) because CPSR is a statewide evidence-based organization of over 840 physicians and other health professionals and supporters that addresses existential public health threats: nuclear weapons, the climate crisis, and the issues of pollution and toxic effects on health, as seen through the intersectional lens of environmental, racial and social justice. We try to prevent what we cannot cure.

PFAS is a family of forever chemicals called “forever” because the dense fluorine-carbon bonds are very strong and they are very slow to degrade. Therefore, they bioaccumulate in humans, fish and our environment resulting in serious adverse health effects. We must turn off this dangerous spicket for this manmade family of chemicals so harmful to human health.

This bill’s definition of PFAS is appropriate and consistent with widely accepted definitions having at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom.¹

Prohibitions in this bill include in baby products, health products, products for contraception, cooking utensils, and clothes just to name a few categories. Even without knowing it, people are getting exposed in daily life to chemicals by consuming PFAS-contaminated water or food, using products made with PFAS, or breathing air containing PFAS.² Measurable levels of PFAS

¹ <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.estlett.5c00478>

² <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/pfc>

are in the blood of nearly all who live in the developed countries.³ For example, PFAS crosses the placenta and is present in breast milk.⁴

Having measurable PFAS in our blood matters because of serious adverse effects health effects of PFAS. The former director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program has said that impaired immune response, kidney cancer and elevated cholesterol in children and adults are **caused** by PFAS chemicals, after decades of reviewing research on the subject.⁵ A recent review linked with high certainty PFAS health effects including: kidney cancer, testicular cancer, liver damage (associated with fatty liver), altered thyroid hormone levels, high cholesterol (increase serum total cholesterol and the fraction we usually associate with heart disease, in adults and children), low birth weight, reduced immune response including a reduced response to vaccines after exposures in utero.⁶ A report by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine attested to the association between PFAS exposure and increased risk of altered immune response, decreased infant and fetal growth, high cholesterol and risk of kidney cancer.⁷ A court ordered study, the C8 Health Study as part of a settlement against a Dupont plant that caused water contamination of over 70,000 residents, found a link between one major PFAS chemical and increased cholesterol, kidney cancer, testicular cancer, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, and pregnancy -induced hypertension.⁸ A Harvard School of Public Health study from Denmark linked more serious outcomes for COVID-19 with elevated blood PFAS levels for one of the less common PFAS chemicals known to accumulate in the lungs.⁹

Thus, the evidence of health harms is strong. SB686 would prohibit the sale of products that have PFAS additives and the public could be spared unknowingly consuming them. This would reduce PFAS pollution in our environment and in our bodies.

SB686 is an important contribution to policy that is informed by strong health evidence and Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility urges your support for this bill.

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³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7906952/>

⁴ <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/exposure.html#:~:text=Workers may be exposed to,your body through your skin>

⁵ <https://theintercept.com/2019/10/24/pfas-toxicologist/>

⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7906952/>

⁷ <https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2022/07/new-report-calls-for-expanded-pfas-testing-for-people-with-history-of-elevated-exposure-offers-advice-for-clinical-treatment>

⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7530144/>

⁹ <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0244815>