

Support the PFAS Prevention Package

We need to stop “forever chemicals” before Minnesotans are exposed

The Problem:

Due to serious flaws in the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) only a small number of chemicals widely used in everyday products have been assessed for safety. This situation began to change in 2016 when TSCA was updated for the first time in 40 years. Since then, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been slowly assessing a massive backlog of tens of thousands of chemicals. In the meantime, public health and the environment are being harmed by the continued widespread use of toxic chemicals.

PFAS chemicals are a class of chemicals most in need of immediate policy action due to their wide-spread use in products, prevalence in breast milk and people’s bodies, and persistence in the environment. Known as “forever chemicals” due to their inability to break down, PFAS also persists in the waste stream, contaminating our soil, air, and water.

We are asking the state of Minnesota to heed the call of EPA Administrator Michael Regan when he stated “Every level of government — from local, to state, to Tribal, to federal will need to exercise increased and sustained leadership to truly make progress on PFAS.”

States across the country, including Minnesota, have passed policies to curb the use of PFAS in select products. While this is a start, more needs to be done. To protect current and future generations from harm Minnesota should take immediate action to stop the use of PFAS in a wide array of products.

Clean Water Action and the Healthy Legacy Coalition are supporting the PFAS Prevention Package which includes the following bills:

Information Disclosure (SF450/HF372): Minnesota needs an accurate picture of where PFAS chemicals are being used and for what purpose. This bill would require manufacturers to disclose the amount of PFAS they’re using, in which products it’s being used, and how it’s being used.

PFAS Non-Essential Use Ban (SF834/HF1000): We need to reduce exposure to toxic PFAS chemicals in our homes and in our environment. To do this, we are seeking a ban on PFAS in all products other than those considered “essential.” Essential use means the product is essential for health, safety or the functioning of society and for which safer alternatives are not feasible and available at time of assessment or in the foreseeable future. An example is medical devices that contain PFAS chemicals.

Firefighting Foam Loophole Closure (SF776/HF742): In 2019, Minnesota banned the use of PFAS firefighting foam for testing or training purposes. However, there are still many ways these foams can be used in the state, endangering firefighters who already have one of the highest cancer rates in the nation. We can reduce their exposure and the water/soil contamination from firefighting foams by strengthening our existing restrictions on foam use. This bill would ban all uses of PFAS in firefighting foams that are not currently required by federal law.

What does the 3M voluntary phase-out decision mean for PFAS legislation?

- While we praise 3M for being an industry leader and announcing their commitment to phasing out the use of dangerous PFAS chemicals, they are not bound by law to complete this goal at all, much less within the timeline they have set for themselves. **The Non-Essential Use ban will codify protections for Minnesota families.**
- **The Information Disclosure bill will verify businesses, such as 3M, that voluntarily stop using PFAS chemicals are being truthful to consumers** with regards to truly honoring their pledge to end the use of PFAS chemicals.
- **3M can’t tackle the problem of PFAS chemical production and use in Minnesota on its own.** These three bills will make it mandatory in Minnesota that dangerous PFAS chemicals are kept out of the products we use everyday and out of our water.

What are PFAS?

PFAS are a class of nearly 5,000 human-made chemicals which includes Per- and Poly-fluoroalkyl substances. These chemicals contain chains of fluorine-carbon bonds, which are very stable and difficult to destroy. The stability of PFAS chemicals make them incredibly persistent, and their mobility makes them bioaccumulate in humans and the environment. Some PFAS chemicals will take upwards of 8 years to break down in the human body, and never break down in water or soil.

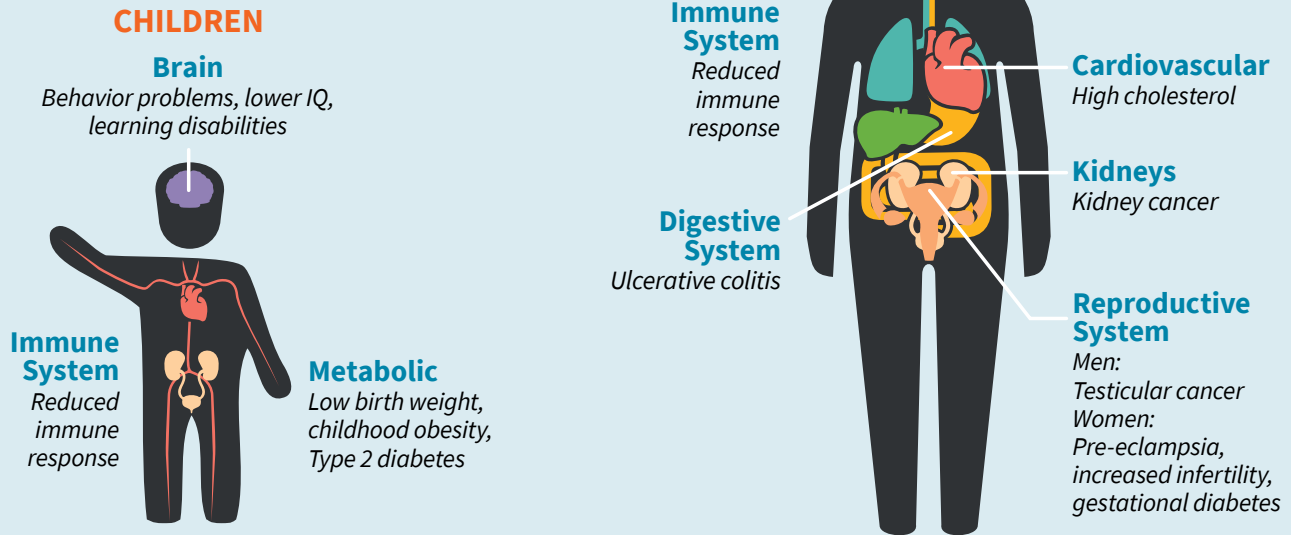
Use in consumer products is common because PFAS add a grease-, oil-, and water-resistance to materials that would otherwise not have that quality. Unfortunately, that means PFAS is found in a lot of different products including ski wax, cosmetics, cookware, stain-resistant treatments, and outdoor wear.



Health Risks

A 2015 consensus statement by 200 experts raised concerns about PFAS and their replacement chemicals. The experts' concerns were so significant they recommended PFAS should only be used for essential purposes given their known health and environmental hazards. Seven years of research by a scientific panel of epidemiologists found a probable link between one PFAS (PFOA) and testicular and kidney cancer, preeclampsia, thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis and high cholesterol. Other studies on PFAS have linked PFAS exposure to reduced immune response and increased infertility. Due to the persistence of PFAS in the human body, the chemicals can accumulate over time, creating greater risk for health impacts.

Health Impacts of PFAS



These are known and suspected health impacts from PFAS and phthalates, a chemical with similar health threats.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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