

From: Micahel Strande
RE: SF 450/HF372, SF 834/HF1000, SF 776/HF742

Chair Klein and members, my name is Michael Strande. I am the father of Amara Strande.

Five and half years ago my daughter, Amara, was diagnosed with a very rare form of cancer called Fibrolamellar Carcinoma. Cancer has taken away more than Amara's health. Cancer is taking away the voice and music of a gifted vocalist and musician. It is doing harm to a creative young woman who writes songs, was an "A" student in college and high school, and found a way to use her cat to raise over \$10,000 for cancer research.

When she should have been having fun at a pep rally at Tartan high school she was recovering from one of over twenty surgeries to remove tumors. When she should have been fixing her hair for a school dance Amara was trying to fix her wig just right because all of her hair had fallen out. When she should have been preparing to get her driver's license Amara was fighting against the side affects of nausea and neuropathy brought about from chemotherapy.

Fibrolamellar Carcinoma tends to attack teens and young adults. Most die within three years of diagnosis. There is no cure for this type of cancer except surgical removal. But only if the surgeon gets good margins. This past summer the tumors have returned to the point where surgery is no longer an option. We do not know how long she has left. It could be weeks or months.

Once Amara was diagnosed my wife and I did what any parents would do: We wanted to know what caused this insidious disease that was attacking our 15-year-old daughter.

We got in touch with Dr. Sandy Simon, a leading researcher in Fibrolamellar Carcinoma, at Rockefeller University. He discovered that the cause of this type of cancer was a breakdown in a person's DNA that comes about from cells in the body mutating then replicating until it does damage to the DNA on a molecular level.

What we know about per- and polyfluoroalkyls (PFAS) is that they can, and do, attack human cells, causing them to mutate and then replicate. According to Simon, "Any kind of chemical in our water, food, or air that can cause damage to DNA will do so. It will have different effects depending on where it hits the DNA." It only takes one cell in the body to be harmed by these chemicals, like PFAS. Once a cell is harmed that cell can mutate and multiply into an ailment, a disease, or a cancer like fibrolamellar carcinoma.

We wanted to know what products in the markets contain PFAS.

What we discovered is PFAS are found in products such as:

- **Cleaning products.**
- **Water-resistant fabrics, such as rain jackets, umbrellas and tents.**
- **Grease-resistant paper.**

- **Nonstick cookware.**
- **Personal care products, like shampoo, dental floss, nail polish, and eye makeup.**
- **Stain-resistant coatings used on carpets, upholstery, and other fabrics.**
- **And some of the most surprising products, where these chemicals can be found, are Halloween costumes and children's toys.**

My wife and I discovered how pervasive PFAS are only recently, in the past few years. Knowing what I know now about how deadly these “forever chemicals” can be I would have been more diligent as to what I was bringing into my home and certainly would have been more cautious about what toys and products I would have allowed my daughters to use or play with.

In my naivete I made the assumption that manufacturers would never intentionally use, or not be allowed to use, such harmful chemicals that could have a horrifying affect on my family.

In navigating what is harmful and what is not it would have been extremely helpful to have known that at least the government was doing all it could to ensure that toys were safe for my daughters to play with because they did not contain deadly PFAS.

Since the dawn of the industrial revolution businesses and multi-billion dollar corporations have polluted our lands, our air, and our waters. There has been a disturbing pattern of such corporations making choices that have done great harm to the environment and have placed human lives at risk. Corporations have shown time and time again the willingness to protect the health and wellbeing of workers and families only when there is public outcry and after legislation by the government forcing them to do so. The intentional disregard to do what is right reveals how morally bankrupt some business leaders and corporate executives can be.

For many corporate boards the decisions that affect the lives of others is based on what they can legally get away with. The standards of what they can or cannot do is determined only by the laws of the county, state, or country they do business in. I find it rare the company that surpasses government standards.

Over the past hundred years allowing companies and multi-billion-dollar corporations to self-regulate standards that protect human lives has shown to be, in many cases, detrimental to the environment and deadly to people. How unfortunate it has been that so many corporations have placed profit over protecting the most vulnerable in our communities.

With the introduction of deadly PFAS chemicals corporations have known how dangerous these chemicals are, yet they have chosen to keep the knowledge of the dangers of these chemicals away from people who purchase their products. Many companies have already shown that they will not volunteer to divulge the use of PFAS in their products unless they are forced by the government to do so.

The people of Minnesota ought to have the choice of whether or not to bring into their homes a product that is created with potentially deadly chemicals. Having products clearly labeled as containing such chemicals will allow consumers to make the best decision for themselves. Banning PFAS in non-essential products will greatly reduce exposure to these deadly “forever chemicals.” With less exposure there will be fewer young girls that will have their lives cut short by a devastating disease.

Chair Stephenson, and members of the Committee, I urge your support of the bills that are before you that pertain to dangerous and deadly PFAS chemicals.

Thank you.

Michael Strande