

To: MN Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
From: Ben Rule - benrule01@gmail.com
RE: SF 450, SF 834, SF 776

My name is Benjamin Rule. When I was 16 years old I was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. By the time it was discovered the Leukemia had already spread throughout 76% of my body, and it was the first of my many close calls. The following 5 years were comprised of an aggressive treatment plan where I went through countless doses of countless types of chemotherapy, frequent spinal taps, multiple surgeries, during which I developed numerous complications, as well.

One of the more major complications was severe pancreatitis due to an allergic reaction I had to a specific chemotherapy the third time I received it. It was already the most painful chemo to receive that I can recall, but the severe pancreatitis that followed quickly outclassed it. The pancreatitis resulted in me needing to be placed in a medically induced coma for 11 days to stop my body from shutting down completely, and when I woke up from the coma it was discovered that I was now a Type 1 Diabetic due to the damage that ensued in my pancreas. I was placed on a high dose of steroids to hopefully reverse the damage done to my pancreas before it was "set in stone", but unfortunately that didn't work and instead it only resulted in avascular necrosis in a few of my joints, primarily in my left hip. The ball and socket joint on my hip had deteriorated into a spike, and I had to walk on it for a few years before I was able to get a hip replacement due to the aggressive treatment plan that I was still undergoing for Leukemia. I will have to undergo the same surgery in the future as hip replacements don't last forever.

About a year after the coma it was discovered that there was also heavy scarring in my pancreas that was blocking the blood flow between it and my spleen, and my spleen was well on track to bursting because of this. I ultimately had to get my spleen and part of my pancreas removed immediately after that discovery, adding another tally to my excessive amount of near death experiences at such a young age.

I went through years of intense physical and emotional turmoil, isolation from my friends and peers, and essentially the complete dismantling of the life I once lived. I was below rock bottom and then suddenly my treatment plan was complete, and my cancer cured, and I was "set free" and told to go make a life for myself.

I beat Leukemia, but I lost myself in the process and I didn't know how to go on.

Over the years of treatment I had watched everyone I grew up with progressively grow and leave me behind while I was stuck in the hospital, and suddenly I was expected to be right on track with them again as if the last few years never happened. I felt like I had nothing and nobody at this point, and I didn't want to continue. I was able to eventually find a mental health program that helped me learn how to carry on before it was too late, and I managed to find the

strength to build a new foundation on the rock bottom where I was stranded for years and lift myself out of the pit to begin anew.

But let me make it clear, in my situation, I'm one of the lucky ones - simply because I survived.

I grew up and lived the majority of my life in the Oakdale area in Minnesota. I went to Tartan High School in Oakdale as well, and I mention this because of the abnormally high number of students who have been diagnosed with some form of cancer while attending there. This is the same area where 3M's PFAS chemicals permeated the ground water and the surrounding environment. While there is no 100% guarantee that the PFAS chemicals are what gave me Leukemia, the same higher than normal rates of cancer in relation to PFAS chemical exposure are happening in Australia, too, next to another 3M plant. The evidence cannot be ignored any longer.

It is unacceptable to allow these forever chemicals to destroy not only our city, but our environment and our planet as well. If PFAS chemicals are even remotely to blame for my illness then I fear for the other people, families, and children living in the areas where they are at risk of exposure. Nobody deserves to go through what I did. We all deserve clean water and good health. We all deserve accurate information, and regulation over, and full disclosure about, the effects of PFAS chemicals that are being forced upon not only humanity but the flora and fauna that live in and make up our environment, as well.

3M has an eco-responsibility to address and remedy the PFAS chemical situation as well as protecting and preserving our planet. This is our only home, where we're all born and we all spend our lives trying to find happiness and meaning, and without any kind of intervention or accountability those ideals will only get harder and harder to achieve. Oakdale deserves better, 3M. So does Minnesota, so does America, so does Australia, and so does our planet.