



## Ohio Environmental Council [Action Fund]

### Interested Party Testimony of Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund HB 328 - Prohibits Class B Firefighting Foam Containing PFAS Chemicals Submitted to the House Commerce & Labor Committee December 1, 2020

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the committee today on HB 328. My name is Pete Bucher, and I serve as the Managing Director of Water Policy for the Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund (OEC AF).

We want to thank Representative Baldrige for sponsoring this legislation. HB 328 would take a step toward preventing PFAS pollution in Ohio communities, setting the stage for further potential action to reduce PFAS pollution across Ohio.

First introduced into consumer products in the 1940s, [PFAS is a family of nearly 5,000 chemicals](#) used to make many common-place products, from non-stick pans to rugs to firefighting foams. For decades, corporations that developed and used the chemicals in products hid the evidence of its toxicity. Today, we know the truth: PFAS is dangerous to humans, and it is unsustainably persistent in the environment.

Unfortunately, the PFAS exposure to humans is already widespread. It has been detected in the breast milk, umbilical cord blood, or bloodstreams of ninety-eight percent of participants in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey](#). PFAS pose myriad health risks, including cancer.

Importantly, not a single chemical in the PFAS family has a drinking water regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act or water quality criteria under the Clean Water Act. Even worse, very few PFAS of the thousands known, can be detected using [currently acceptable EPA methodologies](#).

The [Environmental Working Group](#) estimates that the drinking water of more than 110 million Americans is contaminated with PFAS. It has been found in the groundwater, rivers, and lakes used as drinking water sources, as well as the [rainwater](#) replenishing these sources of water.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reports managing PFAS since at least 2005, yet it has failed to respond adequately to the problem. Early in 2019, the U.S. EPA released its federal [PFAS Action Plan](#), which outlined a variety of steps the agency will purportedly take over the next few years to manage PFAS nationwide. However, history shows that many initiatives involving emerging contaminants can take decades to resolve. Since 2019, we have seen little regulatory action on PFAS from the U.S. EPA.

**Ohio has the opportunity to lead on protecting our communities from PFAS by building on the work of Governor DeWine's statewide PFAS Action Plan. In addition to the regulatory step proposed in HB 328, we encourage the members of this committee and other Ohio legislators to support the development of science-based water quality criteria and drinking water standards for PFAS by the Ohio EPA, as currently proposed in HB 497.**



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If Ohio comprehensively regulates PFAS, it will join the many states across the country taking action to protect its residents from a continuing public health crisis. As the Ohio EPA seeks to identify new sources of PFAS pollution and contamination hot spots in 2020 under the Governor's Action Plan, it must also proactively develop numeric criteria protective of human health and the environment.

Banning the use of PFAS in certain firefighting foams used by first responders for training purposes is a great step in the right direction toward protecting Ohioans from PFAS as proposed in HB 328. **Ohio has the opportunity to lead**, using sound scientific policy to protect the land, air, and water of its residents from PFAS pollution.

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and Members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the committee today on HB 328. The Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund looks forward to further opportunities to work with the Ohio General Assembly to tackle PFAS contamination and protect the health of Ohioans. We'd be happy to answer any questions [via email](#) or we'd be happy to supply any additional information that is requested of us.