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September 14, 2021

### **Ohio Chemistry Technology Council Testimony In Support of House Bill 158**

Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee, my name is Andy Swaim. I am the Director of Government and External Affairs for the Ohio Chemistry Technology Council (OCTC). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 158 (HB 158).

OCTC is the leading advocate for Ohio's chemical manufacturing industry. Ohio is the third largest chemistry producing state in the United States. The Ohio chemical industry employs nearly 40,000 people at more than 600 facilities across the state. The average wage in the industry is over \$85,000 per year. Nearly 97% of manufactured goods can trace their origins back to the chemistry industry. Amongst the thousands of products produced by the industry, there exists a large class of chemicals referred to as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

OCTC supports HB 158 to codify best practices regarding the use of firefighting foams containing intentionally added PFAS, also known as aqueous film forming foams (AFFF). These firefighting foams fall under the category of Class B firefighting foams that serve a vital role in controlling combustible and flammable liquid fuel fires commonly found at military bases, airports, storage tanks, petroleum/chemical operations, rail transportation and power generating facilities. The ability of foam to rapidly extinguish flammable liquid fuel fires has undoubtedly saved many lives, reduced property loss, and helped minimize the global pollution that can result from the uncontrolled burning of flammable liquids.

While "fluorine-free foams" do exist, they do not meet the performance requirements for military specification, and they require substantially more product to produce equivalent fire suppression. Completely eliminating the use of AFFF foams that contain PFAS chemistries is not advisable because these foams are still the most effective agents currently available to fight flammable liquid fires. The chemistries within these foams provide fuel repellency and heat stability, allowing for rapid extinguishment, burnback resistance, and protection against vapor release, which helps to prevent re-ignition.



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The chemistry industry recognizes that it has a responsibility to reduce, to the greatest extent possible, the environmental and health impacts associated with its products. Fortunately, there are alternative fluids and methods currently available that mimic the properties of AFFF foams for the purposes training and testing.

HB 158 will establish a statewide uniform requirement that would ban the use of firefighting foams containing intentionally added PFAS chemistries for training and testing purposes but will allow for their continued sale and use against real world fires. As a result, Ohio firefighters will continue to have access to the most effective firefighting foams available to protect life and property.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.