November 20, 2019

Ohio Chemistry Technology Council Testimony In Support of House Bill 328

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chairman Dean, Ranking Minority Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the Commerce & Labor Committee. My name is Jenn Klein and I am the President of the Ohio Chemistry Technology Council (OCTC). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 328 (HB 328).

OCTC is the leading advocate for Ohio's chemical technology industry, which is the third largest manufacturing industry in the State of Ohio. Ohio, in turn, is the third largest chemical manufacturing state in the United States. In Ohio, the chemical technology industry employs nearly 40,000 people, pays an average wage of over $85,000, and provides approximately $1.3 billion in federal, state and local taxes annually.

The goal of HB 328 is to codify best practices regarding the use of firefighting foams containing intentionally added per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as aqueous film forming foams (AFFF). Class B firefighting foams 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 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" exist, they do not meet the performance requirements of military specification, are not fully compatible with each other, require substantially more product in use and testing (up to 60% more), and they often require significant equipment changes. Completely eliminating the use of AFFF foams that contain PFAS chemistries is not desirable because these are the most effective agents currently available to fight flammable liquid

fires. The chemistries within AFFF foams provide fuel repellency and heat stability, allow for rapid extinguishment, burnback resistance, and protection against vapor release, which helps to prevent re-ignition.

The chemical technology 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 but do not possess the practical application abilities. This makes it possible in many cases to eliminate the use of AFFF foams for training and testing. Thus, the industry has improved both the environmental footprint of PFAS-based foams and practices employed to minimize exposure and discharges.

In closing, HB 328 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 members of the committee may have.