



**Interested Party Testimony of Freshwater Future
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 Kristy Meyer and I serve as an Associate Director at Freshwater Future.

Freshwater Future is a bi-national, Great Lakes region wide nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure the healthy waters of the Great Lakes region.

Freshwater Future would like to thank Representative Baldrige for sponsoring House Bill 328, which would prohibit the use of class B firefighting foam that intentionally contains PFAS for testing and training, a step towards preventing PFAS contamination of Ohio's waterways and water supply.

PFAS was introduced into consumer products in the 1930's for its non-stick, water proof, and stain resistant properties. Today there are more than 5,000 chemicals in the PFAS family and they are widely used in everyday items like teflon pans, scotch guard, food wrappers, and fire fighting foam. Since the 1950's companies including 3M and DuPont have hidden the dangers of PFAS to both humans and the environment.

PFAS is also known as the forever chemical because the strong carbon-fluorine bond does not break down in the environment and bioaccumulates in humans. According to the CDC 99% of Americans already have PFOA in our blood, as PFAS chemicals bind to proteins in human blood and circulate through each organ in the body. PFAS chemicals can cause birth defects, reproductive and immune system problems, liver and thyroid disease, and cancer.

Since PFAS is so prolific in everyday items and is used so frequently the Environmental Working Group estimates that nearly 110 million Americans' drinking water is contaminated with PFAS. Despite continued contamination of our sources of drinking water, there are no regulations under the Clean Water Act or Safe Drinking Water Act to protect Ohioans from further contamination of drinking water sources.

In early 2019, the U.S. EPA released its federal PFAS Action Plan, which outlined a variety of steps the agency would take over the next few years to manage PFAS contamination nationwide. However, little regulatory action on PFAS from the U.S. EPA has occurred and history shows that these initiatives can take many decades to resolve.

Ohio is currently suing DuPont for natural resource damages due to PFAS contamination, which was led by then Attorney General Mike DeWine. Just last year, Governor DeWine released a statewide PFAS action plan. HB 328 builds upon these measures and is an important step in reducing exposure and contamination. Freshwater Future also encourages the members of this committee and other members of the Ohio General Assembly 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.

States across the nation are taking action to protect its residents from PFAS contamination. Ohio has a great opportunity here to lead the nation, by taking a comprehensive approach to regulate PFAS as a single chemical class in our rivers, lakes, streams, aquifers, and drinking water for the protection of public health. 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 and we must go further.

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. Freshwater Future 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.