

February 2, 2022

Testimony on Senate Bill 273

Environment – PFAS Chemicals – Prohibitions and Requirements (George “Walter” Taylor Act)
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1300 nonprofit organizations and institutions. We urge you to support Senate Bill 273 to prohibit use of PFAS chemicals firefighting foam, carpets, and food packaging.

Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl chemicals (PFAs) are highly fluorinated industrial chemicals that have been linked to serious illnesses including: testicular, kidney, liver and pancreatic cancer; reproductive problems; and, low birth weights as well as weakened immunity amongst children. Furthermore, these chemicals remain in our bodies for years and rarely break down in the environment - which is why PFAs are often referred to as “forever chemicals.”

Several states have enacted lower limits on the PFA amount allowed in water than is currently required by the EPA, banned PFAs in food packaging, or banned the use of fire-fighting foam that contains PFAs. Rugs and carpeting have been found to be sources of significant and widespread human and ecological PFAS exposures.

These types of pervasive environmental threats impact our whole population, but unfortunately they also tend to be disproportionately harmful to minorities and families with lower incomes, who because of systemic racism or other social inequities may have fewer choices in where they live, where they can shop, or the products they are able to afford.

We urge you to give Senate Bill 273 a favorable report.