



Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee

March 2, 2022

Chair Stephenson and Members of the House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee:

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) supports HF 3571 regarding a ban on the use of PFAS chemicals in juvenile products. MCEA is a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota's environment. MCEA supports these efforts; they take measured yet significant steps towards addressing this public and environmental health crisis.

PFAS, per-fluoralkyl substances, is an umbrella term for a class of chemicals. They are "forever chemicals" that do not degrade over time, and are difficult and expensive to clean up. These chemicals are poisoning our drinking water, making our fish unsuitable for human consumption, and costing taxpayers millions of dollars in cleanup and associated costs. Minnesota consumers are likely unaware that the carpet they choose for their kids to play on, or the clothing and furniture purchased for their children contains synthetic chemicals associated with a battery of adverse health outcomes. No Minnesota parent should have to worry that their children's crib mattress or changing table will one day cause them to have cancer. That is a failure of regulation, not of Minnesota parents. This bill directly advances public health by reducing pathways of direct exposure for Minnesotans.

This bill also advances environmental health. PFAS are prized for their ability to resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. But these qualities have serious and real consequences. The Pollution Control Agency recently announced its intention to add 15 additional waters as impaired for one particular PFAS chemical, bringing the total number of impaired waters to 26. Unless we take proactive measures on the front end - before these chemicals enter the environment - more of Minnesota's prized waters and fish populations will be infected with these toxic chemicals.

Importantly, this bill responds to the sirens sounded by our state agencies entrusted with protecting Minnesotans and the environment from toxic chemicals. We cannot clean our way out of the PFAS problem. Instead, as the PCA stated in its PFAS Blueprint, "the pollution must be prevented from the outset through restrictions or bans on PFAS uses." That is precisely what these bills do.

In closing, we can thrive without PFAS in our everyday products. PFAS are manufactured chemicals that were never truly necessary. These bills aim to restore common sense by eliminating these chemicals from products Minnesotans use everyday. We urge everyone to heed the calls from our state scientists demanding Legislative help in combating these insidious chemicals by moving these bills forward.

Sincerely,

Andrea Lovoll, Legislative Coordinator, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy