



Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee

February 23, 2022

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

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) supports HF 2906, HF 2907, and HF 2952 regarding a ban on the use of PFAS chemicals in ski wax, cosmetics, and cookware. MCEA is a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota's environment. MCEA supports these bills; they take measured yet significant steps towards addressing this public and environmental health crisis.

These bills protect public health. PFAS are everywhere and are found in seemingly everything. The PFAS poisoning our drinking water, making our fish unsuitable for human consumption, and costing taxpayers millions of dollars in cleanup and associated costs are found in products used by Minnesotans everyday. Minnesotans applying makeup, cooking breakfast, or hitting the ski trails are probably unaware that the mascara, frying pan, and ski wax they are using contains synthetic chemicals associated with a battery of adverse health outcomes. These bills directly advance public health by reducing pathways of direct exposure for Minnesota consumers.

These bills also advance environmental health. PFAS are prized for their ability to resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. But these qualities have serious and real consequences. For example, the PFAS in makeup that runs down the bathroom sink likely travels to a wastewater treatment facility unequipped to handle PFAS. The chemicals exit the treatment facility largely unchanged, where they may be discharged to surface waters. The Pollution Control Agency recently announced its intention to add 15 additional waters as impaired for PFOS, 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, these bills respond to the sirens sounded by our state regulators entrusted with protecting Minnesotans and the environment from toxic chemicals. Our regulators have spoken clearly: 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.

We can thrive without PFAS in our everyday products. For generations, Minnesotans have applied makeup, cooked food, and skied without introducing toxic and poorly understood synthetic chemicals to our bodies and the environment. The three bills championed by Representative Wazlawik 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,

Jay Eidsness, Staff Attorney, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy