



March 21, 2023

To: Members of Minnesota House of Representatives Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
Chair Rick Hansen

Re: Please Support HF 1283, a PFAS rulemaking bill, to protect Minnesotans' health

Dear Chair Hansen and Committee members,

On behalf of the member organizations of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, I urge the Committee to support House File 1283.

MEP recognizes that the per- and poly-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) class of chemicals pose a direct environmental and public health threat on a global level. We believe that change in how we interact with these chemicals can, and should, start in Minnesota.

PFAS enters Minnesota waters in a variety of ways, such as landfill leaching, direct dumping, and incineration. PFAS chemicals have been found in all human blood samples tested, arctic ice, whale blubber, rain, breast milk, and even umbilical cord blood. These toxic chemicals bioaccumulate and have the ability to alter DNA, causing cancer and other dangerous health impacts such as, but not limited to:

Children

- Immune System - reduced immune response, vaccine resistance
- Metabolic - low birth weight, childhood obesity, Type 2 diabetes

Adults

- Immune System - reduced immune response, vaccine resistance
- Digestive System - ulcerative colitis
- Thyroid - thyroid disease
- Cardiovascular - high cholesterol
- Kidneys - kidney disease
- Reproductive System - Men: testicular cancer; Women: pre-eclampsia, increased fertility, gestational diabetes

As the EPA suggests further lowering the drinking water standard for PFAS, many scientists have announced that their research shows no level is safe for humans to consume because of the ability of these chemicals to bioaccumulate. Minnesotans living in environmental justice communities, where pollution tends to be concentrated and testing and treatment options are limited, are especially at risk.

These chemicals are the most stable in organic chemistry, meaning that they are very difficult to destroy and they do not naturally break down, which is why they are known as “forever chemicals.”

Continuing to ignore the crisis the PFAS class of chemicals has created for Minnesota will only cause more damage. Not only will Minnesotans bear the burden of increased healthcare costs associated with PFAS related illnesses, but our business economy will suffer as well.

As other states, the European Union, and countries begin the process of banning PFAS, if we fail to act, we run the risk of becoming uncompetitive in the marketplace with no one to sell goods and products to. We also run the risk of becoming a dumping ground when other states and countries that can no longer sell toxic products, flood the American markets, increasing our healthcare and cleanup costs.


Currently, the cost of cleaning up current contamination is estimated to be in the billions of dollars. We must act now to stop the flow of new PFAS into the environment. This is quickly becoming a never-ending cycle of spending that Minnesota can't afford.

By giving the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency authority to establish water quality standards and setting the limit for perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), Minnesota is taking a strong step towards addressing the negative impact these toxic chemicals have on our environment and human health.

This bill not only helps assure Minnesotans that the water they drink and use to cook and play is healthy and safe, it also helps by preventing additional contamination, thereby limiting future cleanup costs.

We urge your support of HF 1283. Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,
Steve Morse
Executive Director

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Executive Director

Submitted on behalf of the organizations listed on the following page.

A.C.E.S. (Austin Coalition for Environmental Sustainability)

Clean River Partners

Clean Water Action Minnesota

Climate Land Leaders

CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Land Stewardship Project

League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region*

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Minnesota Well Owners Organization

Renewing the Countryside

Resilient Cities and Communities

Roots Return Heritage Farm*

Saint Paul Audubon Society

Vote Climate

Wild Rivers Conservancy

**denotes non-MEP member organization*



March 21, 2023

Dear Representative Hansen and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

We are reaching out to you on behalf of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) and the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) to express our concerns about H.F. 1283. The presence of per-and-polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in Minnesota's waters is a serious health concern that must be addressed. However, the approach proposed in H.F. 1283 will do little to address the presence of PFAS in our waters, while simultaneously creating significant problems for municipalities throughout the state.

Both the CGMC and the LMC are concerned about the health hazards associated with the presence of PFAS in Minnesota's waters. Cities in the eastern metropolitan area and in greater Minnesota have detected PFAS contamination in their drinking water. Our organizations have worked on legislation to reduce the sources of PFAS, and collaborated with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on its PFAS blueprint, and, with our members, have facilitated monitoring PFAS in the influent of wastewater facilities across Minnesota.

Our concern with H.F. 1283 is that it does not address the problem that many cities and their residents in Minnesota are facing. This legislation requires the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to establish water quality standards for six categories of PFAS by July 1, 2026. These water quality standards would be used, in part, to establish PFAS limits in municipal wastewater facility permits (NPDES permits).

However, because there is currently no feasible method for wastewater treatment facilities to remove PFAS from their effluent, the standards proposed in H.F. 1283 would do virtually nothing to address the presence of PFAS in wastewater. Minnesota cities and their wastewater systems do not produce or use PFAS during wastewater treatment, but instead receive these chemicals through the waste stream due to their widespread use. The standards could also lead to permit violations or other significant environmental liability for municipalities who are technologically unable to meet the PFAS limits in their permit.

The CGMC and the LMC are also concerned about the establishment of an arbitrary deadline for completion of these rules, as well as suspending the application of the Minnesota Administrative Procedures Act. While addressing PFAS contamination is an urgent issue, this approach risks creating rules that are not grounded in science or based on the available treatment options.

Similarly, we are concerned about specifying the health risk limit for perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in statute. We appreciate the desire to tackle this problem, but believe that any specific limits should be arrived at through the rulemaking process.

While we appreciate the legislature's efforts to address the PFAS problem, we are opposed to the approach set forth in HF 1283. We urge the committee to move forward on legislation that addresses PFAS contamination at the source, and to provide the MPCA and MDH with the resources they need to complete their work on these issues as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Wefel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

Elizabeth Wefel
Senior Lobbyist, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig A. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Craig Johnson, Intergovernmental Relations
League of Minnesota Cities