MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Elimination of AFFs Containing PFAS Chemicals for Firefighting Purposes

S.B. 837- An Act Concerning The Use of Perfluoroalkyl or Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Class B Firefighting Foams

BACKGROUND

PFAS refers to a class of more than 9,000 chemical compounds that are used in a variety of household and industrial products, including firefighting foams designed to combat petrol fires. These foams (referred to as “Class B” firefighting foams) have contributed to contamination of ground and surface water resources and are linked to a multitude of adverse human health impacts.

Research shows that certain PFAS (PFOS and PFOA being among the most common) can contribute to birth defects, elevated cholesterol levels, thyroid problems, adverse developmental effects and decreased immune response in children. Emerging research indicates that high levels of PFAS in the bloodstream may also weaken human immune response against the novel Coronavirus.

While these chemicals have been eliminated from most firefighting foams given their known health and environmental impacts, Class B foams are required by FAA regulations for emergency purposes and can still be found at airports, military installations, and firefighting training facilities across the U.S.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

- Prohibits the use of Class B firefighting foams containing PFAS for training purposes (effective July 1, 2022).
- Prohibits the use of such foams for any firefighting purpose, unless DEEP fails to identify a safe, fluorine-free alternative (effective July 1, 2023).
- Requires the Commissioner of DEEP to establish a take-back program for firefighting foams containing PFAS chemicals which includes the application of best management practices for such products.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES

- Change the effective date of Section 1(b) to prohibit the use of firefighting foams containing PFAS (for training purposes) immediately upon passage.
- Change the effective date of Section 1(c) to implement a full ban on PFAS treated firefighting foams by July of 2022, unless required by federal law.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS S.B. 837- ELIMINATION OF AFFFS CONTAINING PFAS CHEMICALS FOR FIREFIGHTING PURPOSES

February 2021

www.citizenscampaign.org