

THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPRESENTATIVE KATE HOGAN
THIRD MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 370, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02133-1053

June 21st, 2023

The Honorable Marjorie C. Decker
House Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health
State House, Room 130
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Julian Cyr
Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health
State House, Room 111
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Decker, Chair Cyr, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of H.2197, *An Act to protect Massachusetts public health from PFAS* (Mass PFAS Act). Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a class of chemicals that have been detected across the Commonwealth in drinking water, groundwater, rivers, and wastewater. As House Chair of the Massachusetts PFAS Interagency Task Force, I heard testimony from scientists, advocates, state and municipal leaders, and many other stakeholders on the health and environmental consequences of PFAS contamination and the cost burden on impacted communities and individuals. The CDC estimates that over 98% of U.S. residents have PFAS in their blood, and there is no proven method to remove PFAS from our bodies. Our solution is to stop PFAS at the source through legislation, regulation, and litigation. The health and safety of our residents depend on the Commonwealth's ability to mitigate existing PFAS contamination and prevent future contamination.

H.2197 is a foundational bill that advances many of the recommendations unanimously approved by the PFAS Interagency Task Force and builds upon existing efforts to clean up PFAS contamination in the Commonwealth. This legislation establishes a PFAS Remediation Trust Fund to assist municipalities, public water systems, and homeowners with the high cost of cleaning up existing PFAS contamination. Although the state and federal government offer loans and grants to public water systems through the state revolving funds, there is still a gap between the needs of our communities and the assistance that is available to them. For example, the cost of ongoing maintenance for water treatment systems are not eligible for assistance through the Clean Water Trust, and neither are PFAS testing and home water treatment systems for private well users. Everyone should have access to drinking water that is free from PFAS, and my hope is the PFAS Remediation Trust Fund will bring us closer to that reality. Other measures in the legislation include outreach and education for environmental justice communities, broader public awareness campaigns, and guidance for health care providers.

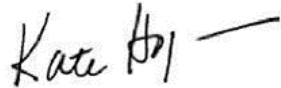
While Massachusetts is committed to appropriating state and federal funds to identify and clean up sites with PFAS contamination, there is an urgent need to utilize an upstream approach and stop PFAS contamination at the source. PFAS are widely used in consumer products and industrial applications, which serve as potential pathways for PFAS exposure. H.2197 establishes a timeline to phase out PFAS in food packaging and consumer products, restricts PFAS in wastewater discharges, and limits the use of firefighting foam containing intentionally added PFAS. This legislation uses a class-based approach to regulating PFAS in these specific contexts to prevent regrettable substitutions, a practice in which industries replace known toxic chemicals with alternatives that are later shown to also have adverse effects on human health and the environment.

I am deeply concerned about high cancer rates among firefighters and their elevated exposure to PFAS through Class B firefighting foam and personal protective equipment. To support our firefighters, who put their lives on the line to protect us, H.2197 establishes a timeline to phase out PFAS in firefighting gear and directs the Department of Public Health to collect and report data related to occupational exposure to PFAS.

Passing the Mass PFAS Act would make Massachusetts a leader in protecting our residents and the environment from these toxic chemicals.

I appreciate your time and attention to this urgent matter and respectfully request a favorable report from the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Hogan" followed by a horizontal line.

Kate Hogan