

It dawned on me during yet another sleepless night last night, that the best way to describe this experience to someone, ironically, is that it is very much like losing everything in a house fire... while simultaneously being poisoned with several of the most toxic chemicals on earth, and then being forced to live in the house that burned.

When I was asked to speak today, I was asked to focus on the costs of contamination. Naming the cost of anything, especially when looking forward into unknown decades, is likely an impossible task. I feel like I've taken on a lot of impossible tasks recently. And there have been achievements made. The State of Alaska decided not to deploy AFFF for testing at all small airports in Alaska. PFOA was just banned globally at the Stockholm Convention. Unfortunately, The United States is the one country that does not abide by decisions made at this Global Summit.

It is important to me to acknowledge the positives, however small, in this sea of toxic chemicals, impossible tasks, and an unresponsive government. So, positives acknowledged, now I'll move on to what we are here to talk about today: the costs.

The greatest *immediate* cost to me, and others in the Gustavus PFAS Action Coalition (GPAC) is our time. Working for a solution to this problem has cost me countless hours upon more countless hours. We are doing the work our state should be doing: raising public awareness, making public the results of PFAS fish testing that the state attempted to suppress, advocating for the toxic AFFF to be removed from our airport and all Index A Airports, organizing for medical monitoring and blood testing to take place. We are living in homes poisoned by toxic chemicals, and the Alaskan public largely hasn't even heard of PFAS.

Time:

I own a small business in Gustavus and I have two kids, 11 and 2, I don't have a lot of extra time. So, I'm giving time that I don't have, because someone has to. I'm taking time away from my family, from my employees, time that should be spent gardening, walking the beach with my kids, tending my business. It's all going to PFAS now, to do what the state is not.

Awareness:

The state of Alaska has done little, arguably nothing, to raise public awareness. I have been persistent in talking about PFAS with friends and neighbors, non-profits, and state agencies. I have been diligent in tracking results of fish testing at DEC, in creating a platform for sharing information, but without that effort, I doubt very many would have heard about the contamination in Gustavus or Kimberly Lake or Polaris Lake, or the Ruth Burnett Sport Fish Hatchery. Public awareness is key in protecting public safety, through the lack of active public notices, bulletins, etc, the state is costing Alaskans their health and safety.

Fish:

The contamination of our salmon and other fish could cost fishermen their livelihoods and is a potential health cost to everyone who eats the fish. Contaminated fish, or even the fear of

contaminated fish is an economic cost to tourism based fishing. There are costs to Alaska's image and reputation if the state continues to try to suppress and downplay the major risk of contamination in our salmon, especially. At the very least Alaska needs to test its hatcheries, **all of them**, but especially the William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery, which resides within a known PFAS plume. The state needs to use the systems already in place for fish sampling, adding an element to the process for PFAS testing to establish a database and determine the scope of contamination. We need to acknowledge that we may have a major public health crisis on our hands if people continue to eat contaminated fish. Further than that our state will have a major financial crisis on their hands should Alaskan Salmon prove to be contaminated to any degree, but especially if the numbers are as high as what we have seen at Kimberly and Polaris Lakes.

AFFF replacement:

Aqueous Film Forming Foam is the standard fire fighting product used at airports across Alaska. However, it is only required at just over half of them. The other 11 have unnecessarily carried AFFF since at least 2004, and possibly earlier, according to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Adak, Kodiak, King Salmon, Bethel, Dillingham, Unalaska, Kenai, Homer, Gustavus, Sand Point, and Valdez are all Index A airports, which means that by FAA regulations, a sodium bicarbonate dry chem fire suppressant is sufficient. Yes, baking soda. We could have avoided over 15 years of contamination by simply following the rules that the FAA set out for Index A airports. When addressed with questions about a baking soda alternative, DOT responded that they did not have that information, however, once provided with the information from the FAA, Alaska's DOT has still refused to act in the public interest, within existing law, to protect public safety. AFFF remains at our airport despite a sodium bicarbonate replacement option, costing us our future health and safety, as well as our faith in the the great State of Alaska to do the right thing, even when the right thing is easy.

Medical:

PFAS levels at the Gustavus School registered at 44 parts per trillion when first tested. Given the lack of confidence interval set in testing procedures, and given that a 30% fluctuation in blind duplicate samples is considered a "good result", and given the proximity of the Gustavus School to results as high as 6,000 ppt, it is scientifically unconscionable to declare the water at Gustavus School "safe to drink". The PFAS of the water at the Gustavus School has cost generations of Gustavus children their health, and the lack of DOT response to the contamination at the Gustavus School cost many of us our faith in the state of Alaska. The National Park Service owns the well that serves the school, and our amazing local National Park Service employees took it upon themselves to create a filtration system that will hopefully protect future generations of children attending the school, and living in the park housing nearby. DOT did nothing.

We have pursued DOT, who referred us to DHSS for medical monitoring, or at very least, a blood test, and breast milk tests to better understand the PFAS pollution in our bodies. We were denied. We were told it does not mitigate risk. I will tell you, with certainty, that my decision

whether to wean or to continue to breast feed my baby was influenced by the results of the PFAS breast milk test that I paid for out of pocket. We cannot mitigate risk without information. Gustavus PFAS Action Coalition (GPAC) is again stepping in here, doing what the state is not. We are working with Alaska Community Action on Toxics to hopefully offer medical monitoring to all residents of Gustavus who have been poisoned by the release of PFAS into our pristine environment.

Personal:

The 50 acres my mother's family purchased from homesteaders when they moved here in the 1960's is the heart of the plume. The plume saturates my history, stains my childhood memories, and floods my mind with doubt about the future.

We feel like we've lost our homes. We've lost our gardens, our medicinal trees, our plentiful spring harvests that grew in natural abundance at our door steps. No more fiddlehead breakfasts, no more fireweed shoots in butter, no more mushrooms picked in the woods as I've done for years.

More than that, though, I feel like I have lost the thing that is most precious to me in all the world, the health of my children. My ability to give my children a clean slate, the promise of a healthy future, the right start, has been taken from me. That, to me, is the ultimate cost. Every parent has this immense and weighty opportunity to give their children health and happiness. As a mother, I hold the seed of promise for a lifetime of everything good that can come to pass in my children's lives. That has been taken from me. It has been taken from my children. An unseen force has crept into our water, our blood, our lives, and taken the promise of my children's future.

The ask:

Address the chemicals that are showing up in the fish and drinking water in Alaska, PFNA, PFHxS, etc. not just PFOA and PFOS. There is current science pointing to the toxicity of all PFAS chemicals, and the state is actively putting its citizens in harm's way by not recognizing all PFAS contaminants.

Collect PFAS samples from sport and commercial catches in addition to the currently collected information on sex, age, length, etc.

Replace AFFF with a safe alternative at all airports immediately.

Provide blood and breast milk testing to any Alaskan who believes they may have been exposed to PFAS.

We would like to post some wild harvest information around town here in Gustavus to warn people of the dangers in consuming the natural bounty that is our tradition to enjoy this time of

year. Please ask DEC to address contaminated natural foods, garden grown foods, fish, game, and fowl.

DEC should be aligned with CDC and ATSDR on setting limits for consumption, please use the data that already exists to move forward, not backward, with setting safe standards for our water and natural resources.