

March 13, 2020

DRAFT Testimony on HB 240, By Randy Krause, Fire Chief for the Port of Seattle

Thank you to the members of the House Resources Committee for allowing me to testify today.

My name is Randy Krause, and I serve as the Fire Chief for the Port of Seattle providing service to Sea-Tac International Airport. I am here to share my support for the bill before you, and to thank Committee Chair Tarr and sponsoring Representative Hannan for their leadership.

At the Port of Seattle, we have been actively involved with the industry to find a solution and are working with our partners at the Federal Aviation Administration to encourage the implementation of new fluorine-free firefighting foam.

While federal law currently requires the use of firefighting foam that includes PFAS chemicals, our airport director Lance Lyttle sent the FAA a letter in 2018 urging the FAA to aggressively pursue a fluorine-free option.

The 2018 FAA Reauthorization Act passed by Congress requires the evaluation and implementation of fluorine-free foam by the end of 2021.

Many of my peers at airports across the globe have already made the change to fluorine free foam and I personally have witnessed fluorine free foam used with great success and am

confident the FAA will find a suitable alternative within the deadline.

We recognize that there is concern in the firefighting industry with the FAA meeting its 2021 deadline.

I, however, am confident the FAA will reach a solution and I am looking forward to being one if not the first airport in the United States to go fluorine free.

We do understand these types of bills have differing effects on various industries. It appears you have addressed some of the concerns we had in Washington state with this bill and we are happy to work with and help the sponsors as this moves forward.

Thank you, and with that I am happy to answer any questions.



1225 East International Airport Road, Suite 220

Anchorage, Alaska 99518

Phone: (907) 222-7714; Web site: www.akaction.org

March 13, 2020

Testimony in Support of House Bill (HB) 240

Chairs Tarr and Lincoln, Members of the House Resources Committee, my name is Pamela Miller and I serve as Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics, a statewide environmental health research and advocacy organization. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 240. We appreciate Representative Hannan's leadership in introducing this bill. We urge passage by the House Resources Committee.

- PFAS contamination represents a significant threat to drinking water sources and public health throughout Alaska. This requires urgent action from the legislature to prevent further harm, ensure safe drinking water supplies for contaminated communities and responsible clean up, and measures to monitor and protect the health of affected community members and first responders. PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a virtually unregulated class of more than 5,000 substances used in many consumer products, industrial applications, and firefighting foams for Class B petroleum and chemical fires.
- ACAT recently released a report: Threats to Drinking Water and Public Health in Alaska: The Scope of the PFAS Problem, Consequences of Regulatory Inaction, and Recommendations (www.akaction.org). For this report, we reviewed hundreds of pages of documents obtained through public record requests and conducted a thorough review of the peer-reviewed scientific literature. In Alaska, the dispersive use of AFFF (aqueous film forming foam) used on military bases and airports has contaminated the drinking water of communities from the North Slope to southeast Alaska. To date, PFAS have been discovered at over 100 individual sites (mostly "AFFF source areas") in nearly 30 locations. The State of Alaska has identified 33 airports where AFFF is known or suspected to have been released into the environment. Of these, only 13 have been investigated to date.
- Ten Alaska communities have PFAS in their drinking water at levels deemed unsafe by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and it is likely that the number of communities with contaminated water will grow as more sampling is conducted throughout the state. We are concerned about the actions of the Dunleavy Administration to roll back protections for communities affected by PFAS.

- PFAS are highly toxic at exceedingly low levels of exposure. This is a significant public health concern given the latest science that shows health effects including: kidney and testicular cancer, high cholesterol, thyroid disruption, ulcerative colitis, pregnancy-induced hypertension, immune system effects, and effects on mammary gland development and breastfeeding duration. There are no enforceable drinking water standards either at the state or federal level. **Adverse health effects are found up to 700 times the guidance level established by EPA of 70 ppt at the 0.1-1 ppt level, thus EPA guidance levels are far from protective.**
- Firefighters suffer higher rates of cancer than the general U.S. population and are at risk from occupational exposures to PFAS. A new study of women firefighters showed that they face high exposures to toxic PFAS chemicals.
- There are safe, effective non-fluorinated alternatives. We have strong evidence from an expert panel of fire safety experts that fluorine-free alternatives are effective and available. Fluorine free firefighting foams are already in use in the gas and oil industry, major airports, and military facilities throughout the world. Replacement of PFAS-based firefighting foam with fluorine-free alternatives in firefighting foam and other applications is imperative given the long-term harm to environmental and public health, immensely high costs of clean up, and liability concerns.
- We look forward to working with members of the legislature to ensure that the bills are as protective as possible for the health of all Alaskans. Based on current scientific evidence, we recommend a class-based approach to setting water standards for PFAS because many PFAS chemicals share similar toxicological properties and adverse health endpoints, often at extremely low exposure levels. The goal should be to set a maximum contaminant level of zero for the class to provide a proper margin of safety for vulnerable infants and children and to protect public health from the class of PFAS chemicals that are extremely persistent, highly mobile, and linked with adverse health effects at exceptionally low levels of exposure. A combined limit of 2 ppt (for PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHxA and PFBS, with a separate level of 5 ppt for GenX) is reasonable given that with current technology, removal of PFAS is feasible at that level. Other states are taking a more class-based and health protective approach.

In order to prevent further contamination of drinking water sources and other water bodies, we also urge you to explicitly prevent the discharge or use for training purposes of class B firefighting foam that contains PFAS chemicals. and that the legislation include a ban on the use of PFAS in firefighting foam such as those that have been supported by firefighters and enacted in such states as Washington, Colorado, and New Hampshire. On March 5, 2020, the Washington State Legislature overwhelmingly approved the strongest state ban in the country to phase out toxic PFAS chemicals in firefighting foam and eliminate important exemptions. The legislation in Washington State was supported by the Washington State Fire Chief's Association

and the Washington State Council of Firefighters. We believe that this is a precedent that the Alaska State Legislature should follow.

Thank you for your consideration.