

April 21, 2021

Representative Josiah Patkotak, Chairman
House Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau AK 99801

To: Members of the House Resources Committee
Re: HB 171 Regulating PFAS Use; Fire/Water Safety

We would like to express our support for House Bill 171, a bill to regulate PFAS and help mitigate the consequences of its use. We feel the Legislature must act due to the inertia on this issue by the Administration and federal government.

My husband and I have lived in Gustavus for over 40 years. We along with dozens of other family members were devastated to learn that our home and property are in the plume of PFAS contaminates and our well is one of many that has been contaminated by these chemicals.

This contamination was caused by the entirely avoidable and unnecessary use of AFFF foam at our airport. This foam was mandated to be used here by the FAA and the State of Alaska DOT/PF despite our airport being one that is exempt from having to use these products. Both the FAA and the State have been aware for many years of the toxic nature of these chemicals but have required our local firefighters to use and train with them anyway. Even worse, despite federal and state regulating agencies' longtime awareness of PFAS issues, these same responders were never made aware of the toxic nature of the foam.

It is our hope that your passage of HB 171 will help other communities in the state avoid the consequences we now have to deal with: fear of long-term health issues, inability to drink our water, no communication from the State if or when we will get any filtration systems for our homes, and the reduction in our property values due to a toxic water table.

Again, we urge your support towards the passage of HB 171 as a rational step forward in protecting the health of Alaska's residents, and the health and economic viability of our communities into the future.

Sincerely,

Melanie and Jim Lesh
P.O. Box 6
Gustavus, AK 99826

Cc: Representative Sara Hannan