

Dear Members of the House Resources Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 171 (PFAS Use & Remediation; Fire/Water Safety). I live in Gustavus, where in 2018 we were devastated to learn that aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) had contaminated numerous private wells in our community.

As you know, currently the Alaska Department of Conservation uses the Environmental Protection Agency's lifetime health advisory level of 70 ppt for the sum of only two PFAS compounds (PFOA and PFOS). However, many peer-reviewed studies have found these chemicals to be dangerous at much lower levels. In addition, growing evidence shows the dangers of additional PFAS compounds, including PFHxS, PFNA, PFBS, PFHpA, and Gen-X.

Until now, I have felt despair that our state government is profoundly failing us and our environment by following the EPA's woefully inadequate guidance.

House Bill 171 gives me hope.

Among other things, this bill proposes to set lower limits for PFOA (8 ppt) and PFOS (16 ppt) and in so doing, demonstrates that Alaska can be a leader in our nation in protecting its residents and visitors from unsafe water.

I am also pleased to see the bill direct the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to offer voluntary blood tests to people with PFAS-contaminated drinking water, as well as to responders (such as firefighters) who are exposed to PFAS. Blood testing for PFAS is something that I have been advocating for the state to support since November 2018.

I strongly urge you to support HB 171. It is time for Alaska to step up and do more to protect its residents, visitors, and environment from these dangerous contaminants.

Sincerely,

Janet Neilson  
Gustavus, AK