



City of Gustavus, Alaska
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Gustavus, Alaska 99826
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April 13, 2021

The Honorable Jesse Kiehl
Alaska State Senator for District Q
Sent via e-mail: Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov

Dear Senator Kiehl:

The City Council strongly supports SB121A. This Bill addresses many important issues the City of Gustavus is battling with. Gustavus is particularly impacted by the use of Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) containing polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances. The contamination to our drinking water has significantly changed the lives of many residents and businesses in town.

Amending AS46.03 to address PFAS is an important step in addressing the devastation these substances have had on our town. All of the sections of this Bill are worth mentioning however, I would like to focus on two: 1) Section 46.04.340 Testing; drinking water; 2) Section 46.03.350 Use of firefighting substances.

Section 46.04.340 establishes cutoff concentration for seven substances. These limits clearly identify cutoff levels are lower than previous limits and will further the protection and recourse of our citizens.

Section 46.03.350 addresses the authority for the use of firefighting substances that contain PFAS, such as AFFF. This section, particularly subsection (b), protects local fire departments and municipalities by establishing a mechanism that recognizes no fault in the execution of their duties.

Please continue supporting our community and those that protect it.

Sincerely,

Brittney Cannamore, Mayor

Cc: Senate Resource Committee Senate.Resources@akleg.gov

April 21, 2021

Senator Joshua Revak
Chair Senate Resources Committee
Alaska Legislature
State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Revak:

Research has confirmed that per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are persistent, bioaccumulate, and are a health concern. There are now calls for more regulatory guidance and stringent requirements have increased. Due to their unique properties, PFAS are widely used in industry and the production of everyday products like nonstick coatings for cookware, stain-repellent coatings for clothes and carpeting, detergents, cleaning products, and firefighting foams. After decades of widespread use, PFAS are ubiquitous and persistent in the environment and have been found in tissue samples in all parts of the world. Though PFAS were developed to simplify our lives, they have become a serious problem requiring increased monitoring and control. Alaskan communities are not immune to these impacts and many now have contaminated sites and drinking water sources. This health crisis has been decades in the making, more than 4,800 known PFAS have been created for commercial use. Regulatory guidance and restrictions vary across regions globally. As new PFAS are identified in the environment, and more toxicological information becomes available, further regulations are certain.

PFAS exposure has been linked to various adverse health outcomes such as thyroid disease, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, and pregnancy-induced hypertension. Thus, with each potential environmental spill or release, public health concerns rise further about PFAS, particularly with regard to drinking water safety. PFAS are of concern because many are persistent, bioaccumulate, and are toxic. PFAS readily bind to proteins in blood and are transported throughout the body. As a result, they are potentially associated with a wide range of adverse health outcomes, including decreased immune function, cancer, elevated cholesterol, and ulcerative colitis, among others. Also, the human body is not effective at eliminating PFAS, and half-lives of some PFAS in humans, such as perfluorohexane sulfonic acid, can exceed five years. Therefore, PFAS can accumulate in the body even when levels in drinking water are low. As a result, drinking water standards and health advisory levels are being set at low ng/L levels. Another reason for concern is the fear of the unknown. The PFAS class contains thousands of compounds, but we currently lack fully appropriate analytical methods and information about the toxicity for most. As a result, people may wonder which PFAS compounds they might have been exposed to and what the potential health effects could be. The unique chemical properties that make PFAS so valuable for modern applications are often the very same that make PFAS incredibly problematic in the environment. First-generation persistent organic pollutants (POPs) were pretty bad, but we could largely predict how they would behave in the environment. PFAS are a new style of pollutant that don't follow the 'rules' of traditional organic pollutants. This is why regulators and scientists unfortunately failed to predict how these chemicals would move through the environment, and why we now have a serious problem of such widespread PFAS contamination of drinking water, agricultural land, and the domestic environment. Furthermore, we are only really just beginning to characterize the health impacts of a chemical that is ubiquitously present throughout the built and natural environment.

Senator Jesse Kiehl introduced Senate Bill 121 on April 7 to protect Alaskans' drinking water by setting health-protective limits on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and to take measures that prevent the future contamination of our lands and waters. I hope that you will support Senate Bill 121. This bill will

- Set health-protective limits on the amount of PFAS in drinking water.
- Provide Alaskans with clean drinking water if theirs is contaminated.
- Allow for voluntary blood testing of affected community members and first responders.
- Prevent future pollution by replacing the use of PFAS-based firefighting foams in favor of safer alternatives.

It is imperative that this action take place soon so that the Alaskan public can be protected from these compounds while a more substantial understanding of the nature and extent of the impact is completed.

You are my representative to the Alaskan senate, but you probably do not know my professional background. I have a PhD in Analytical Chemistry from Portland State University and spent two years as a postdoctoral researcher at the Oregon Health Science Center studying the metabolism of flame retardants that were used in the 70's on children's pajamas. In 1979, I joined the faculty at UAA where I taught Analytical, Inorganic, Environmental chemistry and Toxicology courses. I retired in 2015 after 36 years at UAA with 45 publications mainly with undergraduate students. Ironically, I actually worked at DuPont for five years before returning for advanced study. During those five years I came to understand the failure of industry to recognize the impact of its products on people resulting from a lack of full understanding of their toxicology in particular. The failure is slowly being recognized and a better approach is being applied to chemical uses now. Presently I am a member of the PWSRCAC science advisory committee to offer support on research projects of their concern. I would be pleased to provide similar scientific advice to any chemistry related questions of concern that you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Kennish". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

John M. Kennish, PhD
Retired Professor of Chemistry

April 21, 2021

Senator Joshua Revak, Chairman
Senate Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau AK 99801

To: Members of the Senate Resources Committee
Re: SB 121 Regulating PFAS Use; Fire/Water Safety

We would like to express our support for Senate Bill 121, 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 SB 121 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 SB 121 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: Senator Jessie Kiehl

From: Sally McLaughlin <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 9:11 AM
To: Sen. Jesse Kiehl <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>
Subject: SB121

Dear Senator Kiehl,

I am writing to express my strong support of SB121. I have been directly affected by PFAS contamination in our water and soil and it has taken a lot of hard work and much of our time to fight for our rights to clean water. It is absolutely imperative that Alaska sets standards for health protective limits of PFAS and to allow affected citizens to obtain blood tests to determine their body burden of PFAS chemicals. In addition, we need to replace fire fighting foams that contain PFAS chemicals with safer alternatives that we know exist. This will prevent future pollution - a step that will save millions of dollars and may save thousands of lives.

As you are well aware, our lives in Gustavus were severely disrupted when PFAS were discovered in our water. Life in this once pristine community will not be the same until we can rest assured that this will never happen again, here or anywhere else in Alaska.

Your continued support to our community, and to this issue in particular, has been very much appreciated.

Thank you for all of your work on this very important issue! And thank you for the letter of sympathy when my dad passed away - that was very thoughtful of you.

Sally McLaughlin

From: JoAnn Lesh <[REDACTED]>
Date: April 21, 2021 at 09:20:33 AKDT
To: "Sen. Jesse Kiehl" <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>
Subject: Take Action to Protect Our Drinking Water and Health
Reply-To: <[REDACTED]>

Dear Senator Jesse Kiehl,

Please support SB 121 which will protect the drinking water and health of Alaskans. We request a public hearing in the Senate Resources Committee and swift passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,
M JoAnn Lesh
1268 Gustavus Rd Gustavus, AK 99826
<[REDACTED]>

From: Greg Streveler <[REDACTED]>
Date: April 25, 2021 at 10:14:31 AKDT
To: Senate Resources <SenateResources@akleg.gov>
Cc: "Sen. Jesse Kiehl" <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>
Subject: SB121

To Resources Committee,

I wholeheartedly support this legislation and urge its passage out of your committee. Recent PFAS-related events at the Gustavus Airport's upgrade project serve to underscore its urgency.

Thank you,

Greg Streveler

Box94

Gustavus

Sent from my iPad

From: janet neilson <[REDACTED]>

Date: April 25, 2021 at 20:56:03 AKDT

To: Senate Resources <SenateResources@akleg.gov>

Cc: "Sen. Jesse Kiehl" <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>

Subject: support for Senate Bill 121 (PFAS Use & Remediation; Fire/Water Safety)

Dear Members of the Senate Resources Committee,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 121 (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.

Senate Bill 121 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 SB 121. 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
PO Box 268
Gustavus, AK 99826

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 12:00 PM
To: Senate Resources <SenateResources@akleg.gov>
Cc: Rep. Sara Hannan <Rep.Sara.Hannan@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Kiehl <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>; Courtney <[REDACTED]>
Subject: SB121

Hello,

I understand there is a hearing this week on SB121. The safety of our drinking water, our most precious resource, is of utmost importance to me, and I hope for the governing body of this state as well.

Please get this bill out for a vote this session!! The health of our population, and future populations, (and all living beings) should be prioritized!

I grew up near a former navy base, and when I was in high school, it was discovered that the well water in the nearby neighborhood was contaminated. Everyone had to haul in water for basic needs every day. People died of cancer at crazy rates. We know that PFAS are very dangerous, and it is incumbent upon our elected officials to do the right thing. Do not put it off again for a future session, please!

Thank you,
Peggy Finnegan
2400 W Marston Dr
Anchorage, AK 99517

From: Eycewolf <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 2:00 PM

To: House Resources <House.Resources@akleg.gov>; Senate Resources <SenateResources@akleg.gov>

Cc: Rep. Sara Hannan <Rep.Sara.Hannan@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Kiehl <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>;

<[REDACTED]>

Subject: HB 171 & SB 121

In 2010 the U.N. agreed to a resolution declaring the human right to “safe and clean drinking water and sanitation.”

Safe and clean water is very important to me. Especially as my spouse and I have been trying to conceive our first child, I am extremely alarmed that such dangerously persistent carcinogens and endocrine disruptors are allowed to pollute our drinking water.

As for fire safety, safer alternatives exist that don't cause long-term harm to our water, land, wildlife and people.

Please protect our drinking water by vigorously supporting passage of SB 121 and HB 171.

Fenra Bondarenko

827 Merlin Loop, Anchorage, AK 99518