



For a thriving New England

CLF Rhode Island 235 Promenade Street
Suite 560, Mailbox 28
Providence, RI 02908
P: 401.351.1102
F: 401.351.1130
www.clf.org

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

March 21, 2024

The Honorable David Bennett
Chair, House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Room 135, State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: CLF **Supports** House Bill No. 7356 – Comprehensive PFAS Ban Act of 2024

Dear Chair Bennett:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 7356, a bill that bans the use of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”) in consumer products by December 31, 2032, unless the use of PFAS in a product is considered unavoidable. The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) supports this bill and wishes to thank its sponsors for their attention to this important issue.

CLF is a member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization working throughout New England to counter climate change, restore the health of our oceans, embolden new energy infrastructure, and safeguard health, quality of life, and economic prosperity for future generations. We have worked extensively on issues affecting public health, including advocating for standards for PFAS in drinking water in all six New England states.

PFAS are a public health “perfect storm.” They are a class of chemicals that are extremely persistent in the environment and in our bloodstreams, highly mobile in water, and toxic in tiny amounts. It is important to protect Rhode Islanders from PFAS that is already in our environment, but ultimately we must reduce or eliminate the use of these toxic chemicals to prevent contamination in the first place.

PFAS are toxic to humans in very small concentrations and pose a wide range of health threats. They are suspected to cause cancer and have been linked to growth, learning, and behavioral problems in infants and children. They can also cause problems with fertility and pregnancy; compromise immune systems; and interfere with natural hormones and with liver, thyroid, and pancreatic function. Developing fetuses and newborn babies are particularly vulnerable to PFAS.

First developed in the 1950s, PFAS chemicals are utilized for their water- and grease-resistant properties and are found in a wide variety of consumer products. These include nonstick

cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain-resistant fabrics and carpets, firefighting foam, and personal care and cosmetic products like shampoo, dental floss, nail polish, and makeup.

H-7356 would get these harmful toxins out of products that we use every day and force manufacturers to switch to widely available,¹ non-toxic alternatives.

For these reasons, CLF respectfully urges passage of H-7356. Thank you for your attention to this important public health matter.

Sincerely,



James Crowley
Staff Attorney, CLF Rhode Island

cc: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Darrèll Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation

¹ See Cheryl Hogue, *How to Say Goodbye to PFAS: Researchers Call for Phaseout of Fluorochemicals Based on Health, Safety, and Societal Need*, Chemical and Engineering News (Nov. 20, 2019), available at <https://cen.acs.org/environment/persistent-pollutants/say-goodbye-PFAS/97/i46>.