



H 7356 - FOR

House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Rhode Island State House, Providence Rhode Island 02903

March 21, 2024

Subject: RI League of Women Voters Supports H 7356,
Comprehensive PFAS Ban Act of 2024

Chair Bennett, Vice Chair Phillips, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of RI and as Climate Team Chair for the League, I am testifying in support of H 7356, AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY – COMPREHENSIVE PFAS BAN Act of 2024.

First off, thank you to the lead sponsor, Representative Cortvriend, and all her colleagues who signed on to support House Bill 7356. A Comprehensive PFAS Ban this year, in 2024, is exactly what Rhode Islanders need.

PFAS or Per- and Polyflouroakyl Substances are a class of manmade chemicals used to create coatings and products that will resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. These substances also resist breaking down easily in the environment, so they're known as "forever chemicals". And they are toxic! As a result, and according to a growing body of scientific evidence, PFAS pose serious health risks to both people and animals for a very long time.

CDC's Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry highlights the correlation between increased PFAS exposure and multiple health concerns. Such exposure can negatively affect pregnancy, lower infant birth weight, and depress the immune response. It can also decrease liver and thyroid function, and increase the risk of a wide variety of cancers.

And PFAS are everywhere - in the food we eat, the air we breathe, the landfills in our cities and towns, and the ground and surface water that surrounds us.

PFAS are also present in the bodies we inhabit and, as this bill points out, in the oh-so-many products we own and are exposed to in our everyday lives. Non-stick cookware as well as water-repellant and stain-resistant clothing, rugs, and mattresses are noted for the prevalence of these toxins. Fire-fighting foam, in particular, has been cited as a key PFA contaminant. Even our cosmetics and our electronics are contaminated by PFAS.

House Bill 7356 would ban PFAS in a wide variety of products like these where these toxins are intentionally added.

The good news, though, is that in the last two years, many of you in the Legislature have enacted several important laws that would decrease the exposure of Rhode Islanders to these toxic chemicals. In 2022, in particular, one law was passed to prohibit PFAS in food packaging. Another was enacted to ensure that PFAS would no longer exist in our water supplies. The latter also required standards be set for PFAS in ground and surface waters and landfills across the state. The passage of such legislation was heralded by so many - as well it should have been.

It's time now to pass this Comprehensive PFAS Ban Act. It truly relates to Health and Safety and builds on important legislation already passed. Rhode Island needs the further protection from exposure to these "forever chemicals" that this bill would provide.

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island urges you to vote H 7356 out of committee and send it to the Senate floor with a recommendation for passage.

For further information on PFAS, go to CDC's Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry: [PFAS chemicals overview | ATSDR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Thank you,

Diana (Donnie) McGee

Diana (Donnie) McGee, LWVRI Climate Team Chair
League of Women Voters of RI, One Richmond Square, Providence, RI 02903