



March 29, 2017

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

**VIA FAX: 360-753-4110**

Dear Governor Inslee:

A serious public health concern has emerged in Washington that deserves your immediate attention and leadership. Perfluorinated chemicals (PFAS), which are linked to multiple health effects including cancer, have been detected in Washington's drinking water. A March 2017 Seattle Times article reported PFAS levels in residential wells on Whidbey Island at more than triple US EPA guidelines, most likely due to the use of firefighting foams. Last year Issaquah faced a similar problem, requiring the installation of a filtration device for its municipal drinking water supply.

Unfortunately, drinking water isn't the only source of exposure to these chemicals. All of us are exposed to these chemicals on a daily basis, from the products we use in our homes to the food we eat. PFAS chemicals provide waterproofing and stain resistance and are used in wide array of products, from rain gear and carpet to food packaging and firefighting foam. In addition, PFAS have been found in waters and in fish across the state.

We are extremely concerned about this class of chemicals both because of their health impacts and because they can stay in the human body for up to eight years and last in the environment indefinitely.

The state must quickly clean up and protect drinking water. It is equally important that the state address other sources of PFAS chemicals by moving forward swiftly with a plan that focuses on preventing further problems for our health and environment. As a priority, consumer products should be cleaned up and safer alternatives be required.

We applaud the state for beginning the development of a chemical action plan (CAP) to identify and eliminate sources of PFAS chemicals in Washington. We are participating in this process and hope that a priority is to move forward on an efficient timeline.

An important part of the CAP process is to define its scope. To this end, we respectfully request that you direct the Departments of Ecology and Health:

1. **Address the entire class of PFAS chemicals, rather than just a few.** Several forms of the PFAS chemicals have been partially phased out due to strong scientific evidence demonstrating their harm to human health. However, U.S. chemical manufacturers then moved to a new generation of PFAS chemicals with little safety or health data. Evidence is now mounting that the new generation PFAS chemicals, which have a high degree of similarity to the phased-out compounds, are also toxic and persistent. They are also more mobile and may be more severe drinking water contaminants.  
  
It would be extremely limiting to focus only on a few chemicals, namely, those that U.S. manufacturers have phased out, given how many are on the market today and in products in our homes.
2. **Proceed in a phased approach: Evaluate and make recommendations in phases beginning with product categories where safer alternatives have been identified.** Product categories where safer alternatives are already on the market and being used, such as food packaging and firefighting foam, should be the first categories addressed as progress can be made quickly as a first phase of action. Other categories where we do not have adequate data may take longer to find solutions. We do not want to wait years for a study to be completed when we know for some categories reasonable and practical actions to prevent future contamination exist today.
3. **Make recommendations quickly on action items that will address drinking water contamination, including new drinking water standards for PFAS chemicals.** Establishing drinking water standards for PFAS chemicals would ensure regular testing and compliance, needed now to protect public health. There may also be other regulatory changes for cleanup and dangerous wastes that should be considered more immediately as well.

In addition, the state also has an opportunity to obtain additional information about the use of PFAS chemicals in children's products through the update to the Children's Safe Products Act (CSPA) rule. Toxic-Free Future petitioned Ecology to add perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and related compounds to the CSPA reporting list. By requiring disclosure of PFOA related compounds, Ecology would obtain information on the presence in children's products of compounds that break down to the persistent toxic PFOA. This approach would provide the public and policymakers critical information on potential exposure routes for kids, as well as be consistent with that of the European Union.

Yet, in the proposed rule issued on March 24, Ecology is proposing to add PFOA only to the list of Chemicals of High Concern. This is a key opportunity to obtain information about the use of PFOA-related compounds in children's products, and Ecology should add them to the reporting list.

We are asking for your leadership and for the Departments of Ecology and Health to quickly move forward on this class of chemicals that threatens the health and environment of all Washingtonians.

We also request a meeting to discuss this important public health and environmental issue with you. Please contact Laurie Valeriano of Toxic-Free Future at 206-200-2824 if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Maia Bellon, Director, Department of Ecology  
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