

June 12, 2019

### A.445-A (Steck)/S.439-A(Hoylman)

**Title:** An act to amend the executive law, in relation to reducing the use of PFAS chemicals in firefighting activities.

**Purpose:** Relates to reducing the use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals in firefighting activities.

**Statement in Support:** PFAS chemicals are finding their way into our water, our bodies and the ecosystems around us through food packaging and industrial pollution, which has led to the tragic contamination of municipal water supplies across the state. PFAS chemicals have been linked to numerous health threats, including low infant birth weight, cancers (kidney and testicular), decreased sperm quality, and thyroid hormone disruption and disease. And if this wasn't bad enough, PFAS contamination is now being discovered from an unlikely source: firefighting foam.

A.445-A/S.439-A would ban the use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals (PFAS) in firefighting foam for training purposes, which avoids the unnecessary run off harmful chemicals into water supplies through storm drains. Starting two years after the effective date of the bill, manufacturers may not manufacture, sell, or distribute firefighting foam with intentionally added PFAS chemicals.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the bill would require manufacturers or persons who sell firefighting personal protective equipment to provide written notice to the purchaser at the time of sale if the equipment contains PFAS chemical and the reason why PFAS chemicals are added to the equipment.

Phasing out harmful and unnecessary chemicals, such as PFAS in firefighting foam, will reverse this trend of unacceptable statewide contamination events. PFAS chemicals do not break down in the human body, nor do they break down in the environment, and persist and accumulate as lingering public health threats indefinitely. Remediating our water supplies from PFAS contamination is complicated enough without having to deal with new sources of this persistent pollutant.

**The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter urges your support of this important legislation.**

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<sup>1</sup> This subdivision does not apply to use by a person at a terminal, oil refinery, or chemical plant, and makes provisions for federal laws. It also allows the sale of such foam to fire departments for a period of no more than five years, solely for use in certain specific emergency situations.