November 13, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber
Capitol Building
Albany, N.Y. 12224

RE: A.4739-C (Fahy)/S.8817 (Hoylman)

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We urge you to sign A.4739-C/S.8817, to prohibit the distribution, sale, or offering for sale any food packaging with intentionally added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals (PFAS) in New York State.

PFAS chemicals are commonly used as a grease-repellant in paperboard and food wrappers, and can be easily leached from packaging into food. These “forever” chemicals are persistent and do not break down in the human body, and accumulate over time. A 2019 Food and Drug Administration report found high amounts of PFAS chemicals in milk, meat, produce, and other food items being sold in stores across the country.

In addition to entering our bodies through ingestion, these chemicals also end up in the environment, through the air, water, or when products are eventually disposed of and end up in landfills. Two particular PFAS chemicals, PFOA and PFOS, have caused devastating water contamination crises in New York communities such as Hoosick Falls, Petersburgh, and Newburgh. In these communities, residents have demonstrated high levels of the chemicals in their blood, and have experienced health impacts including kidney cancer, testicular cancer, thyroid disease, and birth defects, all of which have been linked to PFAS chemicals.

This bill would ban the entire class of PFAS chemicals from food packaging containers used in New York. Phasing out harmful and unnecessary chemicals such as PFAS food packaging products will have a lasting effect on the health of New Yorkers and the environment. Washington State signed similar legislation into law in April 2018, and now is the time for New York to follow suit. We urge you, Governor Cuomo, to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers by signing this meaningful legislation into law.

Sincerely,
Roger Downs,
Conservation Director, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter