Memorandum of Support

May 2, 2022

S.6291 (Hoylman)/A.7063 (Fahy)

**Purpose:** Prohibits the use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in common apparel as an intentionally added chemical.

**Statement of Support:** PFAS chemicals have been used since the 1940s in thousands of products including nonstick cookware, electronics, food and textile production, plastic and rubber, stain repellents, polishes, and paints and coatings. By design, they do not break down easily, and studies have shown that these “forever chemicals” accumulate in our bodies over time and increase the risk of long-term health problems, including endocrine and thyroid disruption, impacts on the immune system, reproductive toxicity, and testicular and kidney cancer.¹ Children are especially vulnerable to the toxic effects of these chemicals due to their small size, particular metabolic capabilities, and still-developing brains and major organs.

PFAS chemicals have been discovered in drinking water all around New York State, including the shockingly high levels found in Hoosick Falls and Newburgh as the result of PFAS use in manufacturing and firefighting foams. New York State took steps to reduce our exposure by banning the use of PFAS in firefighting foam and food packaging in 2020, but more action is needed.

S.6291/A.7063 prohibits the manufacture or sale of common apparel containing intentionally added PFAS. This apparel includes underwear, business and casual clothing, and bibs and diapers. It does not include professional uniforms or outwear intended for extreme functions. Through direct contact with PFAS-containing clothing, the chemicals can be absorbed through the skin. These toxic chemicals do not break down in the human body, nor do they break down in the environment, meaning they remain and accumulate for years to come. Washing clothes made with PFAS chemicals also sends them into our water supply, and the chemicals present significant challenges to our drinking water providers and wastewater treatment facilities. The chemicals find their way into the environment when they are eventually thrown away, ending up in a landfill or incinerator.

Sierra Club is devoted to protecting public health and the environment by decreasing exposure to hazardous substances through reducing toxic chemicals in consumer products and in educating consumers about the potential risks of hazardous substances that often end up in our air, water, and natural places. S.6291/A.7063 would help limit yet another pathway of PFAS exposure for New Yorkers.

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The Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Strongly Urges Your Support of S.6291/A.7063.