

Good afternoon,

My name is Jim Egged. I am a retired firefighter and served as one of two members from department on the Western Wayne Hazardous Incident Response Team. I am here today to discuss the three pieces of legislation addressing PFAS and fire fighting foam. There are safe and effective alternatives to Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF). What is needed in these bills is a board inclusive definition of PFAS in order to more effectively address the concerns these chemicals present to not only firefighters but the health and safety of the general public as a whole.

As a retired firefighter I have maintained an active interest in issues that affect not only retirees but current members of the fire service. One of the most pressing issues before us is the use of PFAS in fire fighting foam. These fluorocarbon chains are 8 carbons long. These are called, "long-chain" PFAS, and are toxic at very low doses. These molecules are not processed by our bodies but rather they accumulate in our organs.

Studies of people exposed to high levels of PFAS have shown links to: thyroid disease, immune disorders, abnormal liver function, abnormal cholesterol levels, decreased fertility in both men and women, as well as kidney and testicular cancer. Recent studies have also shown that PFAS can mimic human hormones including thyroid, estrogen and testosterone, resulting in low function in the glands producing these hormones. One study looking at young men exposed to high levels of PFAS over long periods of time found lower testosterone activity. Firefighting is a young person's vocation. At this point in time there is no medically proven way to remove PFAS from our bodies.

There are C6 and fluorine-free firefighting foams identified as the potential alternatives. There are over 100 fluorine-free water additives from 25 manufacturers that have been identified and tabulated with relevant data. The information on these include product and manufacturer name, country, performance specifications met, product application, product description, and the Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) Registry Number, as well as name, and percent of disclosed ingredients in the product. A number of organizations are currently involved in researching PFAS, researching and synthesizing fluorine-free foams, and conducting alternatives assessments of products currently available on the market. Fluorine-free alternatives are preferable because they do not contain fluorine.

The Michigan Legislature must act to protect our health, not just fire fighters, but the health and safety all of citizens of Michigan. These bills need to establish an expanded definition of PFAS beyond the C-8 foams so that regrettable substitutes that are also harmful to human health can be avoided. The bills must also ban the use of firefighting foams containing PFAS, as well as establish a program to take back existing stock of these foams. The training ban should include a ban on the sale and distribution of PFAS. There are safer alternatives are available for use.

What I have just presented here is a brief overview of why and what should be done. You have been and will be presented with much more detailed and scientific explanations of what I have presented. My purpose is to give this committee a firefighter's perspective on these bills. I can support House Bill 4389 with an expanded definition of the PFAS C-8 foams. I cannot support House Bills 4390 and 4391 without a ban on the sale, distribution, and use of PFAS-foams. Thank you very much.