

**Testimony to the House Committee on Energy and Environment  
re: SB 91 A**

**April 16, 2025**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

**Re: Oregon Environmental Council support for SB 91 A**

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of its thousands of members throughout the state, Oregon Environmental Council writes to express our support for SB 91 A as well as our appreciation for Senator Sollman's leadership in authoring this legislation. SB 91 A seeks to phase out Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF) containing toxic Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances commonly known as PFAS. This foam is utilized to extinguish flammable liquid fires, as well as for training exercises. There is significant risk to the health of the firefighters who come into contact with the PFAS chemicals contained in this type of foam. Moreover, AFFF can also harm the public when these chemicals contaminate water and travel throughout the environment. Fluorine free foam now exists and Oregon airports, and some fire stations, have already made the change.

PFAS are defined as chemicals with one or more fully fluorinated carbon- which does not include inorganic fluorine compounds such as fluoride. PFAS are known as "forever" chemicals because they do not break down, meaning the health impacts accumulate over time as the chemicals build up. PFAS chemicals cause health problems that mirror the [common health issues facing Americans](#) such as cancer ([testicular](#), [thyroid](#), [kidney](#)), [high cholesterol and heart disease](#) and [problems with the immune system](#). PFAS also causes reproductive and hormone systems problems such as [thyroid disease](#), [liver damage](#), [preeclampsia](#), [fertility issues](#) and [early puberty](#). PFAS pollutants can actually cross the "placental barrier" and cause harm before a baby is born, including [low birth weight](#), and [birth defects](#). Thinking about the developing brain, this can mean future difficulty with [learning, attention, and regulating behavior](#).

[For firefighters, there is a 9% higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14% higher risk of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population. Sudden cardiac death is also a leading cause of death among firefighters, accounting for 45% of on-duty fatalities. Cardiovascular disease kills firefighters at 1.7 times the rate of the general public. PFAS contributes to both of these statistics because it can raise cholesterol](#), impacting heart health. Fighting fires is by definition, dangerous work and while firefighters have other work-related exposures, PFAS-laden firefighting foam is one exposure that we have the ability to remove from the equation.

By enacting SB 91, Oregon will be joining the majority of states that have already passed policies reducing or eliminating use of firefighting foam that contains PFAS chemicals, including: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin. Enacting SB 91 is an important action which the state can take to ensure firefighters no longer experience preventable workplace exposure to PFAS in the form of AFFF foam and, over the long term SB 91 also removes this source of pollution from Oregon's environment. This will mean a healthier Oregon, not just for the firefighters who protect our lives and property, but for all of us.

SB 91 A will ensure Oregon continues its leadership in protecting firefighters and preventing harm to the environment and the public from these toxic chemicals.

Thank you again for considering this important legislation and Oregon Environmental Council's testimony on taking this important step.

Sincerely,

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