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Senator Sherman Commends Signing of SB 257, Bill to Restrict Fire Fighting Foams Containing PFAS Chemicals

HAMPTON—Today, Senator Sherman’s bill, SB 257, was signed into law. This measure prohibits the use of foams containing perfluoralkyl chemicals in fighting fires.

Prime sponsor Senator Sherman (D-Rye) released the following statement after the signing:

“The signing of SB 257 represents a milestone for ensuring the safety of New Hampshire fire fighters and the prevention of further contamination of our environment.

As marketed by its manufacturers, PFAS represented a breakthrough in fire protection. It was incorporated into our firefighters’ personal protective equipment, into carpeting and furniture, and even our children’s clothing. A miracle to all, it was a fundamental component of fire fighting foam. So confident of its efficacy and so thoroughly reassured of its safety by the manufacturers, the highest tribute to a departing Pease fire fighter was to douse him or her with the foam sprayed from the trucks.

But it was not safe, and only the manufacturers knew of its risk to those exposed. Ulcerative colitis, hypertension in pregnancy, testicular cancer, bladder cancer and problems with our immune systems appear to be the tip of the iceberg for the toxic impact of PFAS on human health. In the environment, it doesn’t degrade, persisting and accumulating in our soil, water supply and fish.

I introduced SB 257 so that we would treat PFAS as this class of chemicals should always have been treated – minimize its use, protect those at risk of exposure and protect the environment from any further contamination. Those at greatest risk, our firefighters, deserve nothing less. My deepest gratitude goes to the firefighters for their work and for their support of my bill, to the legislature for making it better and stronger than it was when it was introduced, and to Governor Sununu for recognizing the threat that this class of chemicals represents to human health and the environment and for signing SB 257.”

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