



Testimony in support of House Bill 7621

AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- CONSUMER PFAS BAN ACT OF 2024

Amber Schmidt, NE Zero Waste Organizer, Clean Water Action

Dear Chair Bennet and Vice Chairs Representative Phillips and Representative Carson, and all members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 7621.

Clean Water Action has been working to remove toxic chemicals from everyday products for decades; we've helped support legislation that has banned BPA in baby bottles, toxic flame retardants in furniture and children's products, and set limits on PFAS in our drinking water. Families and residents should not have to worry about whether the product they are purchasing will someday cause them to have adverse health effects, but without legislative action, that is exactly what happens.

BPA was still considered safe by the Food and Drug Administration when a dozen states first took action to ban the harmful chemical. The FDA finally stepped up and banned it in baby bottles in 2012 and infant formula in 2013, prompted because of multiple states' work on eliminating it, following the best scientific evidence at the time. We are seeing this now with the wave of state legislation to ban PFAS. Currently, RI is joined by 13 other states banning its use in cookware.

Our work on PFAS in Rhode Island began in 2017, and as the former Field Canvass Director, I have personally knocked on doors in most municipalities across Rhode Island long before PFAS became a well-known acronym. When first explaining the toxicity of PFAS, while talking to thousands of residents a year, the connection a majority understood was the connection to PFAS in cookware, notably linking the brand Teflon to PFAS and cancer-causing chemicals.

In 2024, the House and Senate unanimously voted to ban PFAS in cookware in the Ocean State, along with similar legislation passing in Connecticut in 2023. These bills passed with overwhelming support because of the groundswell of resident concern about the persistence of this chemical in our environment and bodies. It would be in direct opposition to the citizens' will to exempt cookware, as HB7621 does.



For all these reasons, we strongly oppose HB 7621 and respectfully urge the Committee to reject HB 7621.

Sincerely,

Amber Schmidt