WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §22-11C-1

§22-11C-1. Legislative Findings.

(a) Legislative findings. — (1) The Legislature recognizes the prevalence of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has classified as contaminants. These chemicals are used in thousands of applications throughout the industrial, food, automotive, aerospace, electronic, oil and gas, green energy, and textile industries. They are used in some fire-fighting foams, food packaging, cleaning products, semiconductors, computers, cellular phones, electric vehicle batteries, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, agricultural pesticides, oil and gas development, defense equipment, hydrogen production, and various other household items. Many are very stable, some accumulate in the environment, and many are highly water soluble, easily transferring through soil to groundwater.

(2) During the 2020 regular session, the West Virginia Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 46 (SCR 46), which requested that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Health and Human Resources cooperatively propose and initiate a public source-water supply study plan to sample PFAS substances for all community water systems in West Virginia, including schools and daycares that operate treatment systems regulated by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

(3) In compliance with SCR 46, the DEP and the Department of Health and Human Resources contracted with the United States Geological Survey to conduct the PFAS study. The USGS study was completed in 2022, with results for 279 sampled sites.

(4) According to the USGS study, PFOA and/or PFOS was detected above the then-current USEPA drinking water health advisory in 13% (37) of the sampled raw water sources between 2019 and 2021.

(5) In June 2022, the USEPA issued updated interim or final drinking water health advisories for four PFAS: perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), perfluorobutane sulfonic acid and its potassium salt (PFBS), and hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid and its ammonium salt (HFPO-DA).

(6) According to the data collected for the USGS study, PFOA and/or PFOS was detected above the June 2022 drinking water health advisories in 49% (137) of the sampled raw water sources (involving 130 public water systems) between 2019 and 2021.

(7) In August 2022, the USEPA proposed to designate PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances because, when released into the environment, these chemicals present substantial danger to public health.

(8) On December 5, 2022, the USEPA issued guidance to state permitting authorities entitled "Addressing PFAS Discharges in NPDES Permits and Through the Pretreatment Program and Monitoring Programs."

(9) The USEPA has committed to establishing drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act for PFOA and PFOS in 2023.

(10) The USEPA has committed to publishing recommended human health water quality criteria under the Clean Water Act for PFOA and PFOS in 2024.

(11) While some manufacturers have already voluntarily done so, it is imperative to identify the remaining sources of PFAS detected in the raw water sources for public water systems so that these sources of pollution can be properly addressed, minimizing the impacts to public drinking water systems. Identifying and addressing PFAS sources will also benefit people who rely on impacted private drinking water wells.

(12) It is in the public interest for West Virginia to reduce toxic chemicals in drinking water supplies to protect the health of West Virginians and strengthen the state's economy.