



Cape Alliance for Pesticide Education

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Non-Toxic Strategies for a Sustainable Cape Cod

July 22, 2019

Rep. Harley Rouda
Chair, Subcommittee on Environment
2300 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. James Comer
1037 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: The Devil They Knew – PFAS Contamination and the Need for Corporate Accountability

Dear Chairman Rouda, Ranking Member Comer, and Members of the Subcommittee,

On behalf of GreenCAPE and the PFAS-exposed community of the Hyannis, MA, I thank you for conducting investigatory hearings regarding the national PFAS contamination crisis. I am writing to call your attention to the serious environmental and public health crisis that continues to impact the Town of Barnstable and its residents. As court records, public documents, and extensive reporting on this issue demonstrates, DuPont/Chemours officials knew for decades about the adverse health effects associated with their toxic PFAS compounds, yet they continued to allow their AFFF (aqueous film-forming foam) product to be used -and promoted its use-without regard to the impacts they knew it would have on human health and the environment. We respectfully request your help in getting Hyannis and other U.S. communities the assistance they need to move forward and be assured their water will be clean and protected from further pollution.

Cape Cod's exposure to PFAS (per and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) via contamination of drinking water supplies has not been remediated partly due to the considerable expense. The victims of this contamination without consent should not be burdened with the ongoing expense of municipal water filtration systems, frequent water testing, site remediation and investigating and drilling clean water sources. This PFAS class of compounds poses threats to health due to persistence, bioaccumulation and toxicity-- according to a publication of the National Institutes of Health. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/m/pubmed/19759456/>. In my town of Barnstable, the residents of Hyannis, Hyannis Port, and West Hyannisport have been exposed to PFAS-contaminated drinking water for at least 5 decades without benefit of filters for most of that time. The PFAS-affected water district serves a State and Federally recognized Environmental Justice Community. Most residents do not have the resources or time to learn about their health risks or pay for special water filters or health monitoring. Many do not speak English and are altogether unaware of the risks from the water that supplied the hospital, several schools, businesses and residences for decades.

The Barnstable County Fire and Rescue Training Academy (BCFRTA)-the primary source of this PFAS contamination-was host to the fire departments from many communities outside the town as well as utility companies. All these entities trained with AFFF and used high volumes of water which drove the PFAS contaminants in the soil into the Hyannis water supply wells. Wells have had to be taken off-line, expensive filters installed which require costly maintenance, and in addition, water is purchased from other suppliers at great expense. Only long chain PFASs are removed with the filtration method; short chain PFASs are not removed. New wells must be drilled at great expense to the rate payers to offset the loss of the polluted wells. The tourist season-during which our population triples-adds considerable strain to the system. Firefighter's health suffers from their exposure to the AFFF product and at the training site which is saturated with PFAS, through their drinking water and their turnout gear permeated with PFAS-despite the fact that civilian and DoD firefighters followed the instructions on the manufacturers' labels.

The Town of Barnstable is responding to the crisis as effectively and efficiently as possible despite the significant effort and monies to manage the contamination and the seasonal draw on the system. What is needed is a strong commitment from our Congress for the following concrete actions to adequately address the health and economic needs of affected residents and businesses:

1. **Nothing about us without us.** Impacted community members are critical stakeholders and need to have their voices heard. As those most affected by this crisis, they deserve to have strong involvement in any decisions made regarding their water supply and the future of the polluting site. Training at the BCFRTA should be discontinued and training should no longer be permitted as the site is located above an EPA-designated sole-source aquifer, the only drinking water supply for the peninsula. The site requires full remediation because of the aquifer and the potential for PFAS plumes to contaminate other public supply wells nearby. The soils at the training site are so saturated with PFAS from the AFFF that even a rain event moves the PFAS toward the well fields. The costs of remediation and cleanup should not be borne by the innocent victims, nor the towns. The producers of the PFAS should be held responsible as they were aware of the health impacts and ignored them.
2. **Create a National PFAS Action Plan that includes enforceable drinking water standards that are science-based and protective of infants, children, and our most vulnerable populations, and for the combined total of all detectable PFAS.** The process must be open, transparent, and thorough, and must include voices and perspectives of those most impacted by PFAS contamination. **Related to this is our strong desire to see PFASs regulated as a chemical class and not individually which could take decades since all the PFASs have not even been identified. Public health would be better protected by regulating them as a class.**
3. **Improve nationwide laboratory capacity and technical assistance for identifying all PFAS in air, water, soil, biosolids/sludge and a broad array of biomatrices (blood, fish, shellfish, produce, meats/livestock, dairy, eggs, honey, cranberries etc.).** Public health advisories should be promulgated and widely advertised to minimize further health effects. Towns rely on the State and the EPA for scientific expertise and need the guidance for health protective regulations, so they can better understand the scope of the problem and find appropriate solutions to mitigate effects on residents and the economy. The federal government should allocate monies for these critical needs. If EPA was acting in accordance with their mission, PFASs would already have been designated as hazardous substances and these communities would have been given Super Fund status along with the financial ability to clean up. Exposed residents should be provided with PFAS blood testing and health monitoring upon request due to their decades-long exposure via the public drinking water.

4. Map the plumes. Margins of the contamination plume have yet to be established even after several years but while it is well documented that PFAS have migrated more than 1500 feet from the training site, the plumes have yet to be delineated and these may already be impacting other nearby water systems. This delay in mapping the plumes will allow continued migration of PFAS off site. Hyannis residents of the Town of Barnstable need your IMMEDIATE attention. The site requires aggressive treatment, immediate closure and cleanup and polluters should shoulder this expense. The overriding priority must be public health.

5. Improve public outreach about mechanisms of exposure and avoidance of PFAS. This is more critical for communities already at risk from their water supply. Create and supply simple materials in several languages about where and how PFAS are created, used, and discharged and how to avoid them.

6. Support changing the military specification to allow for PFAS-free firefighting foams. Governments around the world no longer use these fluorine-based foams. Washington state has restricted the sale of PFAS foams for their local firefighting districts and adopted a ban on training with PFAS foams at any facility, including airports. Federal legislation can broaden this restriction by immediate adoption of non-toxic fluorine-free firefighting foam and permanent elimination of PFAS firefighting foam. While these foams remain in use, further contamination of our drinking water and the environment is inevitable. We ask that your Subcommittee actively support these restrictions and support secure storage of old PFAS-containing AFFF until a safer method of destruction technology can be reliably employed.

7. Blood Testing and Biomonitoring of Exposed Communities. Lastly, but very importantly, we are requesting financial aid for exposed communities to determine the extent of their PFAS body burden. Exposed residents can provide the results of their blood analyses to their primary care providers who will be more informed about the direction of their future health care. PFAS-exposed communities everywhere will benefit from such a program which the MA Department of Public Health has been unable to fund. We have concerns for our future health and the well-being of our children, many of whom have been exposed to this contaminated water for their entire lifetimes, including before birth/in utero, and via breast milk.

We are requesting leadership on the issue of PFAS contamination. Pollution of drinking water impacts many communities nationwide, but Cape Cod is particularly vulnerable as it is an EPA-designated Sole-Source Aquifer. We are drinking our groundwater along with everything else that percolates through our sand bar. We need to protect this precious resource for our health, but water is also our economic lifeline- the tourism and fishing industries upon which Cape Cod depends.

We are in strong support of the petition points submitted by Clean Cape Fear (and summarized below) and hope you will use your legislative authority to:

- * Immediately regulate PFAS as a class of highly toxic chemicals--regardless of their chain length.
- * Designate PFAS as hazardous substances under CERCLA so PFAS manufacturers pay for cleanup.
- * Regulate the disposal of PFAS chemicals and every product using PFAS to reduce exposure pathways.

- * Require consumer product labeling of products using PFAS so every consumer can make informed choices on how to reduce their continued exposure to these toxic chemicals.
- * Require PFAS manufacturers provide test standards and methods for all PFAS--including byproducts.
- * Require EPA rodent toxicology studies on all known PFAS--especially the compounds already detected in human blood. Without rodent studies, the EPA cannot set regulatory standards for health protective drinking water levels.
- * Begin epidemiological studies using heat mapping of all known cancers in highly contaminated PFAS communities to identify cancer clusters. Cancer is the only human disease already well documented at the national and state levels.
- * Update the EPA 537 method to include new PFAS as standards become available.
- * Require comprehensive PFAS testing of all public utilities to identify the scope and extent of PFAS contamination.
- * Set the Method Detection Limit (MDL) for PFAS to 1 ppt. The public has a right to know how many drops of PFAS are in our drinking water due to their persistence and bio-accumulative effects.
- * Set Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for all PFAS to 1 ppt based on ATSDR research.
- * Deny federal contracts to chronic PFAS polluters--like DuPont/Chemours. These companies should not be rewarded for their poor stewardship.
- * Educate the public and medical professionals about the potential medical risks and complications of exposure to PFAS.
- * Require American manufacturers adopt the precautionary principle, where the burden of proof is on the emitter to prove a compound is safe before discharging it into the environment.

Thank you for your leadership on this crucial matter affecting our community and communities throughout the United States.

Respectfully-

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Dear Chairman Rouda, Ranking Member Comer, and Members of the Committee,

I want to express profound thanks for hosting this historic hearing to address Industrial PFAS contamination. I am writing to you as a concerned community member in the Wilmington, NC area that has been polluted by Chemours Fayetteville Works Plant. I am also writing to you as a physician who has practiced in both New Hanover County and in nearby Brunswick County, which also draws its water from the Cape Fear River downstream from Chemours.

Over the little over 2 years we have known about Gen X and other emerging contaminant PFAS in our water, not a single day has gone by without a person asking me about the health effects from these chemicals. I ran for Congress in the 2018 cycle, and within about 10 days of finding out about our contaminated water, nearly 250 people showed up at lunchtime to protest a closed-door meeting between Chemours executives and our lawmakers. This is how important PFAS contamination has been to our community. I am now on the leadership team for a grassroots group called Clean Cape Fear. When we first hosted what we called a Water Wednesday, to educate our community on PFAS, we filled an entire ballroom to standing room only in our convention center.

While Chemours may have their slick lobbyists selling you a bill of goods about what good neighbors they are being, you deserve to know the truth. In reality, I firmly believe no real action would have been taken by Chemours to clean our water without imminent legal threat. As it stands, they are pointing fingers at their prior parent of Dupont to obfuscate responsibility and avoid basically any financial accountability for cleanup or the health effects in the aftermath of poisoning our families. And in fact the Consent Order Chemours agreed to with our state Department of Environmental Quality has proven vastly inadequate—we have also found highly contaminated wells upstream from the Chemours plant that were affected by air pollution. The more we keep looking the larger the radius gets around the plant—and every step farther is a new fight for cleanup and resources to protect our Eastern NC families. And now this radius from Chemours pollution is affecting very small, rural water authorities who have little to no means to protect their water consumers without federal assistance.

At this time, the DuPont/Chemours Fayetteville plant has been required by court order to discontinue direct discharge into surface waters and is constructing an industrial thermal oxidizer to trap air emissions. However, dozens of PFAS compounds are still detected in our river and our finished tap water is regularly exceeding the 70 ppt health advisory level. We also know, from a Gen X exposure study, that Wilmington residents have 2x more PFOS in their blood than the national average, 3x more PFOA, and 4 other newly identified PFAS linked to Chemours at alarmingly high levels in their blood. This chemical cocktail was put into our blood without our consent.

As doctors we take an oath to "First, do no harm." But we know all too well that Fortune 500 polluters like Chemours are not bound by a principle of nonmaleficence. Instead, they violated the sanctity of our bodies without our consent. Our kids should never be guinea pigs at the

hands of Fortune 500 polluters. In recent months, we have discovered that we have a thyroid cancer cluster in the tri-county Cape Fear area where I have resided and practiced medicine. I can tell you I personally made countless referrals for thyroid cancer evaluations practicing here—this was never the case in my previous practice experiences. I hope other physicians will never know the heartbreak of facing a patient with cancer asking if their tumor was in part caused by poisoned water coming out of their taps—the same water their kids and grandkids are still drinking. I cannot tell you the pain of having to always say, “I do not know.”

May you never have to know what it is like talking to the breastfeeding mother who cannot afford reverse osmosis filtration in her home, and who just saw an article on how readily PFAS are transmitted in breast milk. What does this do to violate the bonding experience of mother and child? And in recent weeks, we became aware of studies that are not yet peer reviewed but that may indicate PFAS like Gen X can cross the blood-brain barrier. What could this mean for the neurological development of our kids, and could this be the reason why we keep seeing, and epidemiologists are examining, what might be a pediatric brain cancer cluster in our area?

I also am a former physician with the Department of Veterans Affairs. In this capacity, I cared for countless Veteran patients and family members who were poisoned at Camp Lejeune—imagine what it is now like to be in Eastern NC sandwiched between Fort Bragg (just upstream from Chemours) and Lejeune. Sadly, I have military and Veteran friends who live South of Fort Bragg and their neighbors' wells are now contaminated with PFAS from Chemours air pollution. And now, they are reading about the risk of PFAS from the use of Aqueous fire-fighting foam (AFFF) at DOD installations or local fire stations—what do they tell their friends and family that will ameliorate their concerns? It's like *deja vu* all over again from Lejeune. Families are once again being poisoned by water on and around their DOD bases that they unknowingly drank while their family was sacrificing immeasurably in service to this country. Please act so we have answers for these cancer patients, and the mothers, and the active duty military, and these Veterans. Because without your help, we may never know how to answer these families grave concerns about their health. They deserve better.

And as a final note on what we do know in Wilmington, because we live it everyday—and that is the profoundly malevolent playbook of industrial PFAS producers like DuPont/Chemours. They simply replaced PFOA and PFOS, that they knew caused cancer, with similar molecules without testing them for human safety. Communities like ours have essentially become unconsenting laboratories of human guinea pigs for their cruel experiments that amount to assault. Many of our families are at their lifetime limit for PFAS exposure, and this includes children who were born contaminated after Chemours dumped undisclosed for decades. This is why, as a physician and as an impacted community member, I am imploring you to act NOW:

* Immediately regulate PFAS as a class of highly toxic chemicals--regardless of their chain length.

- * Designate PFAS as hazardous substances under CERCLA so PFAS manufacturers pay for cleanup.
- * Regulate the disposal of PFAS chemicals and every product using PFAS to reduce exposure pathways.
- * Require consumer product labeling of products using PFAS so every consumer can make informed choices on how to reduce their continued exposure to these toxic chemicals.
- * Require PFAS manufacturers provide test standards and methods for all PFAS--including byproducts. Doing this will allow states, like North Carolina, to respond quickly to emerging PFAS threats.
- * Require EPA rodent toxicology studies on all known PFAS--especially the compounds already detected in human blood. Without rodent studies, the EPA cannot set regulatory standards for health protective drinking water levels.
- * Begin epidemiological studies using heat mapping of all known cancers in highly contaminated PFAS communities to identify cancer clusters. Cancer is the only human disease already well documented at the national and state levels.
- * Update the EPA 537 method to include new PFAS as standards become available.
- * Require comprehensive PFAS testing of all public utilities to identify the scope and extent of PFAS contamination.
- * Set the Method Detection Limit (MDL) for PFAS to 1 ppt. The public has a right to know how many drops of PFAS are in our drinking water due to their persistence and bio-accumulative effects.
- * Set Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for all PFAS to 1 ppt based on ATSDR research.
- * Deny federal contracts to chronic PFAS polluters--like DuPont/Chemours. These companies should not be rewarded for their poor stewardship.
- * Educate the public and medical professionals about the potential medical risks and complications of exposure to PFAS.

* Require American manufacturers adopt the precautionary principle, where the burden of proof is on the emitter to prove a compound is safe before discharging it into the environment.

Thank you for your leadership on this crucial matter affecting our community and communities across the United States and the world. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kyle Horton, MD, MBA

Internal Medicine Physician and Concerned Citizen

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Dear Members of Congress,

It is with urgency and hope that I write this letter asking that you to listen to science and stakeholders over industry.

It is imperative that citizens in our country be granted the right to safe drinking water. PFAS compounds are many, they are persistent and bioaccumulate in our bodies and in our environment, they are near impossible to remediate and are known to cause severe health effects.

I am one of many who have been exposed to this poison in my drinking water. I am one of many burdened by the cost of bottled water, who turns on my faucet to make dinner for my child and wonders if I am hurting him. I am one of many being taxed out of my home and paying extremely high water bills to pay for someone else's mess. I am one of many living in a community with cancer clusters above our national average.

It is imperative that you vote to protect people like me. Protect the people you represent and put them first and foremost above those making money off manufacturing these chemicals. This is a crisis. The longer we take to act on strict guidelines that are protective of public health, cleanup standards and polluter accountability, the harder it will be to resolve and the greater the harm to people like me.

I urge you to vote to protect humanity and listen to science.

Respectfully,

Karen Pighetti

Westfield, MA