

**Testimony of Mark Ruffalo**  
**On**  
**Regulation of Per- and Poly-Fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)**  
**Before the Environment Subcommittee**  
**Of the**  
**House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**  
  
**November 19, 2019**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mark Ruffalo, and I am honored to play the role of Rob Bilott in the upcoming movie “Dark Waters.”

You’ve already heard testimony from Rob, so you know that Rob has dedicated his life to protecting all of us from PFAS.

What you may not know is that Rob has risked everything – including his career and his health – to uncover one of the greatest corporate environmental crimes in history. He is a true American hero.

It was Rob who uncovered what this Committee has now shared with the American people:

- That, by the 1950s, 3M knew that PFAS could build up in our blood.
- That, by the 1960s, DuPont and 3M knew that PFAS could be toxic.
- That, by the 1970s, DuPont and 3M knew that PFAS was indeed building up in the blood of all us and harming their own workers.
- And that, by the 1980s, DuPont knew that PFAS was contaminating the tap water of nearby communities.

But that's not all.

Rob not only discovered that these toxic chemicals were building up in our blood.

He also sounded the alarm, sharing what he found with the EPA. And Rob also secured the funding, through a legal settlement with DuPont, to undertake the biggest human study of toxic chemicals ever.

Thanks to Rob, independent experts reviewed the bloodwork and medical records of 70,000 people whose water had been poisoned by DuPont. That study found a probable link between PFOA and cancer and five other diseases, including reproductive and immune system harm.

Hundreds of subsequent studies have found that other PFAS chemicals, including replacement PFAS chemicals like GenX, pose many of the same risks.

Here's what we now know.

We know that PFAS are called "forever chemicals," because they build up in our blood and organs. We know that PFAS chemicals have been linked – through animal, worker and human studies – to serious health problems.

But, Mr. Chairman, we have done nothing.

We have not stopped industrial releases of PFAS into the air and water.

We have not stopped PFAS from being used in food packaging, cookware, cosmetics and other everyday consumer products.

We have not stopped the use of PFAS in firefighting foam.

Nor have we have cleaned up legacy PFAS pollution.

There is still no legal requirement to filter PFAS from tap water, so more than 100 million Americans are likely drinking water contaminated with PFAS.

Nor is there is any legal requirement to clean up the most contaminated sites.

So who is paying for our failure to act?

It's people like Sandy Wynn-Stelt, whose husband died from liver cancer after a nearby tannery poisoned the drinking water with PFAS.

It's people like Bucky Bailey, whose mom, Sue Bailey, worked at DuPont's Teflon plant while she was pregnant with him and who was born with numerous birth defects.

It's real people, Mr. Chairman – people who live in frontline communities like Oscoda, Michigan – real people who are paying the price – in the form of higher health care costs and higher water bills.

These chemicals don't respect political boundaries. They are found in the blood of people in Oatman, Arizona, and they are found in the blood of people in Fargo, North Dakota. They are found in me, and they are found in all of you.

So – who should pay?

The companies. The companies that made billions of dollars producing chemicals they knew were building up in our blood and knew were toxic but failed to tell anyone – failed to tell their workers, failed to tell their neighbors, failed to tell their regulators.

These companies are making us sick, Mr. Chairman, and we are paying to heal ourselves.

I understand that today's hearing is focused on PFAS, but this problem is not limited to PFAS.

In America, it falls to us – ordinary people – to prove that these chemicals are toxic before the chemical is regulated by our government. That’s simply backwards. It’s the companies that make billions of dollars producing these chemicals, not the rest of us, who should be required to prove their products are safe.

Mr. Chairman, it’s time to regulate PFAS chemicals. It’s time to end industrial releases of PFAS into the air and water, it’s time to end needless uses of PFAS in everyday products like food packaging, it’s time to finally filter PFAS out of drinking water, and it’s time to clean up legacy PFAS contamination, especially at our military bases.

Let me close by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, for now holding four hearings on the PFAS contamination crisis, and for elevating the stories of real people like Sandy Wynn and Bucky Bailey, and real heroes like Rob Bilott.