



SIERRA CLUB

NORTH STAR CHAPTER

North Star Chapter
2300 Myrtle Ave, Suite 260
St Paul, MN 55114

February 4, 2021

Dear Chair Hansen, Vice Chair Wazlawik and the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the North Star Chapter of Sierra Club in support of HF78 which designates PFAS as a hazardous substance.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a class of synthetic organic substances that are persistent, mobile, bioaccumulate, and toxic. They do not occur in nature and do not easily breakdown. They can travel significant distances and have been found in the Arctic and in communities of Alaska natives. PFAS has recently been found in rainwater with the most likely source industrial emissions and evaporation from firefighting foam.

PFAS has been used for nearly 70 years to produce hundreds of products that we use every day. Water contamination has occurred where PFAS was produced, at industrial sites where PFAS is used to manufacture goods, and at disposal sites. In the East Metro, groundwater contamination covering 150 square miles impacted the drinking water for 140,000 people. Additionally, PFAS has been used in firefighting foam since the 1960s and water and soil contamination has been found at military bases and commercial airports around Minnesota.

PFAS is used in food packaging, clothing, cosmetics, and personal care products. As a result, the chemical ends up in compost and wastewater treatment facilities. When compost or biosolids are applied to farms and gardens, PFAS can bioaccumulate and leach into food grown there further increasing the risk to our health and the environment.

PFAS is linked to diseases including kidney, breast, and testicular cancer; liver, thyroid, and pancreatic diseases; high cholesterol; hormone disruption; ulcerative colitis; and immune system effects. An Oakdale, Minnesota [study](#) found links to reproductive problems including infertility, premature birth, and low birth weight babies. Another recent [study](#) found that vaccines are less effective in people with high blood levels of PFAS.

Designating PFAS as a hazardous substance is an important step to cleanup contaminated soil and water and to protect the environment and health from future contamination.

Sincerely,

Lori Olinger
Chair, Zero Waste Task Force
Sierra Club North Star Chapter