

Senate Bill 903

Ending Forever Chemicals Act

Senator Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley)

THIS BILL

SB 903 introduces a comprehensive, science-based approach to phasing out unnecessary uses of PFAS, health-harming chemicals that are also known as “forever chemicals” because they persist in the environment for years.

SB 903 would protect public and environmental health by prohibiting the use of PFAS in any products where there is a safe alternative, and allowing for the use of PFAS when its use in a product is unavoidable due to it being necessary for the function of the product, critical for health and safety, or when there are no safer alternatives.

ISSUE

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a large class of fluorinated chemicals that do not break down or break down into other persistent PFAS, leading to their common description as “forever chemicals.”

PFAS spread quickly in the environment, and are now found to be present at harmful levels in humans, animals, and food sources. The [California State Water Board and United States Environmental Protection Agency \(“EPA”\) warn that some PFAS have the potential to harm health at very low levels](#), the equivalent of one drop of water in 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools. [According to the EPA](#), PFAS are highly carcinogenic, with other harmful health effects that include liver disease, decreased fertility, endocrine disruption, developmental harm, and immune system suppression.

Virtually every person living in the United States has PFAS in their blood ([Calafat et al. 2007](#)). Testing from 2019-2022 found PFAS in water systems serving millions of Californians ([NRDC](#)).

The California legislature has previously acted to remove PFAS from a number of product categories, including firefighting foams, textiles, cosmetics, juvenile products, and paper-based food packaging.

Despite the risks and legislative efforts, PFAS are still widely used in consumer products and industrial processes.

SOLUTION

SB 903:

- Provides for the use of PFAS when –
 - 1) there are no safer alternatives available;
 - 2) the function provided by PFAS in the product is necessary for the product to work; and
 - 3) the use of PFAS in the product is critical for the health, safety, or functioning of society.
- Prohibits the sale and distribution of any products that contain PFAS, or products produced using PFAS, effective January 1, 2030, unless determination is made that a specific use of PFAS is currently unavoidable as outlined above; and
- Creates a review process giving manufacturers the opportunity to petition the Department of Toxic Substance Control for a determination that a use of PFAS is currently unavoidable. Unavoidable uses of PFAS may receive time-limited exemptions until the use becomes avoidable.

SUPPORT

Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (Co-sponsor)
California Ass of Sanitation Agencies (Co-sponsor)
Clean Water Action (Co-sponsor)
Environmental Working Group (Co-sponsor)
Natural Resources Defense Council (Co-sponsor)
National Stewardship Action Council

CONTACT

Jessica Uzarski
Legislative Aide
Office of Senator Nancy Skinner
(916) 651-4009 | Jessica.Uzarski@sen.ca.gov