

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 18, 2018

The Honorable Scott Pruitt  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt:

We write in regards to recent reporting that Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff were involved in the suppression of the release of a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) draft assessment evaluating the adverse human health effects of perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). This assessment concluded that PFOS and PFOA can cause human harm at a much lower level of exposure than previously acknowledged by EPA. We were particularly concerned by reports that the release of this HHS study was withheld for political reasons, on the grounds that it would create a “public relations nightmare.” If true, this constitutes a clear violation of the public trust.

Your agency is currently evaluating whether to promulgate a legally enforceable Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) regulation establishing a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for PFOS and PFOA. Such a decision should be guided by science and free from political interference. Too many communities across the nation are plagued by ongoing, serious questions regarding the threat the contamination may pose to their health and that of their loved ones. Some also doubt the commitment of the federal government to address this issue in a manner that prioritizes and adequately addresses their health concerns. Many of us represent these communities.

Studies on PFOS and PFOA have indicated links to cancer, thyroid disease, immunological effects, hormonal impacts, increased cholesterol, fertility issues, and negative effects on growth, learning, and behavior of infants and older children. For decades, these chemicals have been used in hundreds of industrial applications and consumer products such as carpeting, apparels, upholstery, food paper wrappings, metal plating and fire-fighting foams. Aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) is a synthetic, water-based foam used to fight Class B (fuel-related) fires. The U.S. Department of Defense has identified 126 facilities where, due to the use of AFFF, testing of nearby water supplies found the chemicals in exceedance of EPA’s current safety guidelines.

The American people have a right to see taxpayer-funded research on the human health effects of exposure to PFOS and PFOA. Moreover, any such research should guide EPA’s actions to effectuate its mission of ensuring all Americans have access to clean, safe drinking water. We demand your explanation for these reports and, most importantly, the immediate release of the HHS study.

Sincerely,

  
Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress

  
Brian K. Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

  
Peter T. King  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal  
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Daniel T. Kildee  
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Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress



William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress

cc:

Secretary Alex M. Azar II, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Director Patrick Breysse, PhD, CIH, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry