



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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July 19, 2021

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development and Committee on Pro-Life Activities, we write in support of the PFAS Action Act of 2021 (H.R.2467). This bipartisan legislation aims to reduce human and environmental exposure to toxic chemicals.

Per-fluoroalkyl and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a diverse class of compounds containing thousands of individual chemicals. Useful for non-stick and water-repellent properties, certain PFAS have been integrated into numerous household products. PFAS have also been employed in firefighting foam across the United States.

PFAS are resistant to degradation and bioaccumulate in the environment and the human body. Prolonged exposure to these chemicals can cause cancer, thyroid problems, birth defects, and reproductive, developmental, and immune system disruptions. Of particular concern is a growing body of research that indicates pregnant and nursing mothers, and their children, are especially affected. Such exposure occurs through polluted drinking water, food, soil, dust and the use of consumer products manufactured using PFAS. The widespread utilization of these “forever chemicals” has resulted in significant environmental contamination.

The USCCB has consistently promoted integral human development, where technology and human ingenuity are directed towards the common good. Human and environmental health concerns are interconnected, and we must not forget that “human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement” (*Laudato Si'*, no. 5). The PFAS Action Act of 2021 both upholds the dignity of human life and preserves ecological health. It regulates PFAS, enacts drinking water standards, and designates contaminated sites as eligible for Superfund cleanup.

Access to safe, potable water is an indispensable human right and government leaders have a moral responsibility to safeguard society from poisonous chemical contaminations. Addressing U.S. Congress in 2015, Pope Francis declared that “you are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good.” We pray for your efforts to protect the life and health of mothers, the unborn, all of society, and God’s creation.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Paul S. Coakley".

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chair, Committee on Domestic Justice
and Human Development
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Joseph F. Naumann".

Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann
Archbishop of Kansas City
Chair, Committee on Pro-Life Activities
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops