



# East Contra Costa Fire Protection District

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

August 25, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### **SB 1044 (Allen) — Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD), I am writing to request your positive consideration of SB 1044 (Allen). ECCFPD provides essential fire service to the communities of Brentwood, Oakley, Discovery Bay, Bethel Island, Byron, Marsh Creek, and the Morgan Territory. This bill will reduce Californians' exposures to toxic, "forever," per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) by restricting the sale and use of firefighting foam containing PFAS chemicals in California and mandating that purchasers of firefighting gear are provided written notice if the equipment contains PFAS chemicals.

PFAS are a class of thousands of man-made chemicals used widely in industrial and consumer products, from cookware and water- or stain-resistant clothing to firefighting foam. They are called "forever" chemicals because, in nature, they very slowly break down and some never break down. Linked to a long list of health problems, among them cancer and developmental issues, PFAS can be harmful at extremely low doses. These chemicals are contaminating the air, soil, water, plants, wildlife—even our own bodies.

Unfortunately, PFAS can be detected in the blood of nearly every American. In California, the latest testing reveals that nearly 150 public water systems that serve approximately 19 million Californians across the state have wells that are contaminated with PFAS. This is based on partial testing completed to date, and the number is likely much higher.

In addition, firefighters already face greater risks of cancer and other health problems than the general population because of exposures related to their lifesaving work. Biomonitoring has documented elevated levels of PFAS chemicals in the bodies of firefighters, putting our first responders at greater risk of harm from the health effects associated with PFAS, including cancer.

Firefighting foam is a significant contributor to both PFAS pollution and to firefighter exposures. Fortunately, non-PFAS alternative foams are being used widely, and successfully, in other states and countries across various industries, including in major airports like London's Heathrow and at major oil production facilities. An independent expert panel evaluated available

alternatives and concluded that all PFAS-based firefighting foam should be phased out, without exception, and that non-PFAS foams are viable and cost-saving.

SB 1044 will protect everyday Californians, and firefighters, from unnecessary exposure to these harmful chemicals while moving the state towards available, affordable, and effective alternatives. It is for these reasons that ECCFPD respectfully requests that you sign SB 1044 (Allen) into law.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Brian Helmick, Fire Chief

cc: Senator Ben Allen