



New England Water Environment Association, Inc.
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March 22, 2023

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chairperson
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
State House
Providence, RI 02903
Send written testimony to: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: New England Water Environment Association; 2023 House Bill 5673; For

Dear Chairperson Bennett and Members of the Committee:

The New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA) respectfully submits this letter to express its support of 2023 House Bill 5673, the Comprehensive PFAS Ban Act of 2023. NEWEA fully supports the legislative intent of H5673 to ban all uses of PFAS excepting certain unavoidable products, and further supports a staged approach to achieving the ban as outlined in the bill. By addressing PFAS at the source, H5673 will significantly reduce the use of PFAS compounds in consumer products, which in turn will positively impact human health and the environment.

One of our members, the NBC owns and operates the State of Rhode Island's two largest wastewater collection and wastewater treatment facilities (WWTF) serving approximately one-third of the state's population. The NBC, like all the 19 WWTFs in Rhode Island, receives PFAS compounds and PFAS precursors in its wastewater influent from a variety of domestic, commercial, and industrial sources. Rhode Island's WWTFs' are designed for the removal of conventional pollutants (biological oxygen demand, total suspended solids, and nitrogen) and have little to no impact on PFAS compounds present in wastewater. Hence PFAS compounds entering a WWTF either leave in the effluent or accumulate in wastewater biosolids, a biogenic product of the treatment process. The presence of PFAS has the potential to limit the beneficial end use of these biosolids and thus greatly increase the cost of managing the 30,000 dry tons of biosolids generated annually in the State of Rhode Island.

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WWTFs have no control over PFAS compounds received in domestic sanitary wastewater and are not designed or capable of removing these classes of chemicals. Moreover, there is no proven technology currently available that can effectively remove PFAS from domestic wastewater. Addressing this issue at its source is our only option for protecting human health and the environment from PFAS exposure. H5673 will eliminate PFAS from goods and products therefore stopping this problem at the source and creating a simple and sound way to protect the public's health and welfare.

Thank you for the opportunity to express NEWEA's support of 2023 House Bill 5673 and for taking the time to consider NEWEA's position.

Sincerely,

Robert Fischer, NEWEA President

Mary Barry, NEWEA Executive Director