

## SUPPORT HB 5219:

# Why We Need to Ban PFAS Chemicals in Food Packaging

### The Problem:

Food packaging often contains toxic PFAS chemicals that resist grease. PFAS (per and poly-fluoroalkyl substances) are so highly persistent that scientists call them “virtually indestructible.” Their widespread use has made them global pollutants that threaten the health of people and our environment.<sup>1</sup>

### PFAS Chemicals are Strongly Linked to:

- kidney and testicular cancer
- hormone disruption
- liver toxicity
- high cholesterol
- harm to the immune system
- reduced birth weight

Chemical companies claim that newer “short chain” variations are safe. This is not true!

The limited research on newer short chain

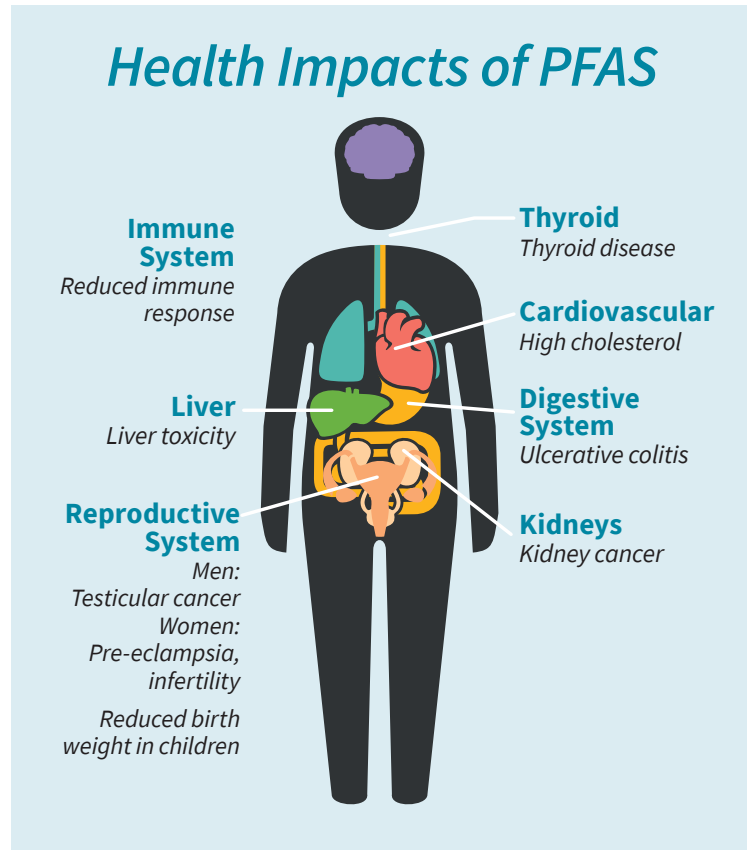
PFAS show similar health impacts.<sup>2</sup> In fact, over 200 leading scientists from around the world have called on the international community to “enact legislation to require only essential uses of PFASs.”<sup>3</sup>

### PFAS Chemicals are Widespread in Food Packaging

- In a recent study of popular brand food packaging 40% tested positive for fluorinated chemicals. The packages were bought in around the country including New England.<sup>4</sup>
- Recent testing by the Washington Department of Ecology found PFAS chemicals in all 30 microwave popcorn bags tested.

### PFAS Chemicals Migrate from Packaging to Food

PFAS chemicals migrate from microwave popcorn bags, sandwich wrap, muffin papers, and food wrappers. The amount of PFAS chemicals moving into food increases with heating, like in the case of microwave popcorn.<sup>5,6</sup> While the US Food and Drug Administration is tasked with regulating food contact materials, the agency’s oversight has not effectively addressed PFAS.



## Safer Alternatives Are Available

Companies are switching to safer alternatives. The European company Coop has developed a PFAS-free microwave popcorn bag that is currently in use. Over half of food packaging tested in the 2016 study of over 300 food packaging materials did not contain PFAS, proving alternatives are currently in use.



## States are Taking the Lead

As PFAS chemicals continue to raise concerns across the country, several states are taking action on the chemicals. Washington state passed a ban on PFAS in food packing in March 2018 and Maine did the same thing in 2019. Currently, Rhode Island, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Virginia and Vermont are all considering legislation on the issue of PFASs in food packaging.

## What Connecticut Can Do

CT should pass HB 5219 to ban the use of PFAS chemicals in food packaging. PFAS chemicals in food packaging pose a serious problem for our health. Safe alternatives already exist. PFAS in food packaging is a “non-essential” use and should be avoided to protect health and the environment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

***Anne Hulick, 860-302-4861***

## REFERENCES

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