

# Sen. Cowles: Bill to prevent PFAS pollution passes the Legislature

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MADISON– Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) released the following statement after the State Senate and Assembly passed 2019 Senate Bill 310, sending the bill to the Governor’s desk:

*“This legislation will reduce the impact that PFAS compounds have on Wisconsin residents and the environment by banning the unconfined use of this firefighting foam that contains intentionally-added PFAS except in emergencies. These firefighting foams are lifesaving products that may still be necessary to protect the safety of first responders and community members. However, PFAS contamination of water caused by these foams, primarily from training and testing, is causing serious hardship for residents of Northeast Wisconsin and throughout the state.”*

2019 Senate Bill 310 was authored by Senator Cowles and Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette) to address one of the primary sources of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) pollution. This legislation would ban the use of firefighting foams with intentionally-added PFAS for training as training foams without PFAS can still properly prepare our first responders. Senate Bill 310 still allows the use of class B firefighting foam for true emergencies because PFAS-containing foams are the most effective at addressing the dangerous circumstances that can arise from flammable liquid fires on a highway or runway, at a factory, or elsewhere.

*“This bill creates the necessary balance between reducing the dangers to human health and negative environmental footprint these chemicals pose while also preserving the ability of first responders to use an extremely effective tool to fight*

*flammable liquid fires. After months of working on an amendment with the DNR to ensure the proper implementation of this policy, I'm pleased to see this bill pass the Legislature, and I'm hopeful that the Governor will sign this bill into law.*

***“Real environmental progress often comes one step at a time. While Senate Bill 310 isn't the whole answer to PFAS contamination in Wisconsin, coming together and finding common solutions to address this issue must start with restrictions on the use of PFAS firefighting foams that will prevent more pollution.”***

The new regulations in Senate Bill 310, if signed into law, will be complimented by LRB 4489 which funds a clean sweep program to collect and safely dispose of unused and unwanted PFAS-containing firefighting foam. This legislation was submitted for introduction by Senator Cowles, Representative Timothy Ramthun (R-Campbellsport), and others last week as part of the Speaker's Task Force on Water Quality.