

**Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery**  
**Full Committee Hearing: Improving Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination on**  
**PFAS for Michigan Communities**  
**August 1, 2022**

Thank you to Michigan State University for hosting us today, and thank you to each of our witnesses for joining us here in East Lansing today, and for your dedicated service to the American people.

Today's hearing will examine the federal government's efforts to address contamination from Per- and poly- substances, or PFAS, and identify potential solutions to build a more comprehensive approach to conduct research, assess the risks and effectively remediate contaminated sites.

PFAS are man-made chemicals that are widely used in industry and consumer products due to their ability to repel water, oil, and heat.

Known as "forever chemicals", because they do not break down naturally, these substances are used in everything from commercial products like food packaging, nonstick cookware, stain resistant carpet, and waterproof clothing to firefighting foams.

Despite their prevalence, and well-known health effects, PFAS are not currently regulated by the federal government. For the last eighty years, they have been allowed to seep into our air – soil – and even our drinking water. Prolonged exposure to these toxic chemicals can lead to serious health effects such as cancer, liver and kidney issues, and reproductive and developmental problems.

In Michigan, we have the highest amount of recorded PFAS contamination sites in the country – largely because Michigan is at the forefront of identifying these locations.

But these chemicals continue to pose significant risks to our communities, and more than 2 million Michiganders have been exposed to these toxic chemicals in their drinking water.

In particular, servicemembers, first responders, their families, and residents of communities surrounding military sites across Michigan have continued to face sustained exposure to PFAS. These folks, many of whom served our country, deserve better.

That is why, as Chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee – I have pushed for the federal agencies responsible for PFAS contamination to take a more proactive approach to addressing this crisis.

In September 2018, I convened the Senate's first hearing on PFAS contamination to examine the federal role in addressing this crisis, as well as a field summit in Grand Rapids to hear directly from Michiganders about the impact PFAS contamination has had on their lives.

Most recently, last December, I convened a hearing to examine a Department of Defense Inspector General report that showed that DoD continued to use these chemicals despite knowing they could have harmful effects.

Since these hearings, my colleagues and I passed the bipartisan infrastructure law, which invests in clean drinking water and includes dedicated funding to address PFAS contamination, and secured provisions in the 2019 national defense bill that bans the Department of Defense from purchasing firefighting foams containing PFAS chemicals.

I have also been pleased to see the Administration take important steps to address this crisis with EPA's PFAS Strategic Roadmap and new drinking water health advisories for PFAS, significantly lowering the Lifetime Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFOA and PFOS, and setting a new advisory level for GenX chemicals.

However, Michiganders are continuing to suffer the consequences of exposure to these hazardous chemicals, and government must do more to protect the health of our communities. I will continue pushing the federal agencies that are responsible for PFAS contamination to take additional steps to help affected communities clean up these sites.

I'm also working to pass legislation I introduced earlier this year to prevent PFAS contamination in our communities, including my Preventing PFAS Runoff at Airports Act, which incentivizes commercial airports nationwide to purchase testing equipment that avoids spreading PFAS chemicals, and my Federal PFAS Research Evaluation Act, which will give us a more complete understanding of the impact PFAS has on our health and environment, so that we can more effectively address PFAS contamination.

I also plan to introduce new legislation in the coming weeks to improve intergovernmental coordination for PFAS contamination and facilitate a more comprehensive approach to clean up existing sites, and prevent future contamination.

Our first panel today features federal officials who can speak about their agencies' efforts on PFAS contamination, and discuss strategic action plans, and additional opportunities to improve coordination for every aspect of PFAS response, ranging from research to remediation.

Our second panel will feature Michiganders who have lived this crisis firsthand, and I look forward to hearing their perspectives and insights on how to keep our friends, families, and loved ones out of harm's way.

I appreciate all of our witnesses for taking the time to be here today to share more about the work they have undertaken to address PFAS exposure, and to join in this productive conversation on what more we must do to protect our communities from these harmful chemicals.