Local Hazardous Waste Management Program
Serving Seattle, King County, Cities, and Tribes throughout King County

King County
Solid Waste Division
Water and Land Resources Division

Public Health
Seattle and King County

Seattle
Public Utilities

Sound Cities Association

Participating Cities and Tribes:
Algona
Auburn
Beaux Arts
Bellevue
Black Diamond
Bothell
Burien
Carnation
Clyde Hill
Covington
Des Moines
Duvall
Enumclaw
Federal Way
Hunts Point
Issaquah
Kenmore
Kent
Kirkland
Lake Forest Park
Maple Valley
Medina
Mercer Island
Muckleshoot Tribe
Newcastle
Normandy Park
North Bend
Pacific
Redmond
Renton
Sammamish
SeaTac
Shoreline
Skykomish
Snoqualmie
Snoqualmie Tribe
Tukwila
Woodinville
Yarrow Point

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Simona Bălan, Ph.D.
California Department of Toxic Substances Control
Safer Products and Workplaces Program
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Product-Chemical Profile for PFAS in Carpets and Rugs

Dear Dr. Bălan:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Product-Chemical Profile for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Carpets and Rugs, which outlines the scientific basis for selecting this priority product. We hope our comments are beneficial as the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) finalizes the Product-Chemical Profile in preparation for rulemaking and we look forward to learning more through your process. California's actions on reducing the use of toxic chemicals often impact manufacturing more widely, benefiting consumers in Washington State and King County. We appreciate the Safer Consumer Products focus on alternatives analysis, replacement with safer alternatives, and avoiding regrettable substitutes. This Product-Chemical Profile demonstrates that PFAS in carpets meets the key prioritization criteria for listing as a Priority Product under the California Safer Consumer Product regulations.

The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County (LHWMP) is a multi-jurisdictional program that works to protect and enhance public health and environmental quality in King County. We do this by reducing the threat posed by the production, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. LHWMP provides services to 2.1 million residents and over 60,000 businesses throughout King County, the most populous county in Washington State. LHWMP coalition members include King County, the City of Seattle, suburban cities within King County, and tribes.

PFAS is a persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) class of chemicals that poses risks to human health and the environment. We applaud DTSC for taking on this important issue and agree with DTSC's approach to PFAS as a class of chemicals. While actions initially focused on the long chain compounds

perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), it is important to include similar PFAS degradation products and PFAS that are being used as alternatives in order to avoid regrettable substitutes. LHWMP supports identifying safer alternatives for the entire class of chemicals.

Impacts of PFAS and solutions to address it must be considered through a lens of equity and social justice. Safer products must be available to all members of our community, not only for those who have the time and money to research and buy certain products. In addition, low-income communities are more likely to have legacy products such as older carpet that are more likely to contain compounds such as PFOS that are no longer used in new carpet.

We would like to bring your attention to additional environmental monitoring in Washington on PFAS in various environmental media. In the most recent study by the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), surface water from 15 waterbodies, effluent from five wastewater treatment plants, freshwater fish from 11 sites, and osprey eggs from three sites were sampled for PFAS (Ecology 2017). Fish in urban lakes were above the Washington State Department of Health provisional general population screening level for PFOS in edible fish tissue. This is particularly concerning for equity and social justice, especially for subsistence fishers and others who may rely on fish from these lakes as a food source. PFAS has been found in sediments from lakes and urban bays in Washington (Ecology 2013 and 2014a). These studies help confirm that PFAS compounds have PBT properties and considerable potential for harm from multiple sources and pathways.

DTSC requested answers to specific questions in “Questions for Stakeholder Input” and LHWMP has responded to the questions that are most relevant to us.

PRODUCT AND CHEMICAL DESCRIPTION (CH. 1)

1. Is the product definition clear and unambiguous as to which related products are included or excluded?

   Yes. The profile clearly and unambiguously describes which products are included, referring to other regulations and industry guidelines. There is a good description of how PFAS are used in carpets and what applications are included.

3. Is the definition of the class of PFASs clear and accurate?

   Yes. The description of the class of chemicals is clear and accurate. The document clearly describes what chemicals are included and why, referring back to the California Environmental Contaminant Biomonitoring Program. The definition of “at least one fully fluorinated carbon” includes the entire class of chemicals, including the chemicals we don’t yet know about because of confidential business information. All of these chemicals are of higher concern because they are very persistent in the environment, even though they vary in their bioaccumulation and toxicity. While we do not have as much data on other PFAS, the

data we have is concerning, and combined with the persistence, is reason to be concerned. This is shown in the recent paper by Gomis et al. (2018) looking at the potency of fluorinated alternatives.

PRODUCT-CHEMICAL POTENTIAL EXPOSURES AND IMPACTS (CH. 2-6)

5. What methods are used for handling and disposing of PFAS waste and PFAS-containing carpet and rug pre- and post-consumer waste?

   King County considers carpet a construction and demolition material and it is accepted at King County solid waste transfer stations for disposal. Washington has state-only Dangerous Waste regulations for halogenated organic compounds (HOC), but currently does not have specific guidance for dealing with PFAS-containing waste (Ecology 2014b).

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this important effort. LHWMP strongly supports DTSC's work on PFAS in carpets. This work will inform efforts within King County to protect the public from PFAS exposures from carpets.

Sincerely,

Lynda Ransley

Lynda Ransley
Program Director
Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County

References

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