

AB 1200

Safer Food Packaging and Cookware Act

Assemblymember
Phil Ting
19TH DISTRICT



SUMMARY

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) is a class of “forever” chemicals that is widely used, extremely persistent, and can lead to adverse health outcomes. To protect California’s residents and environment, this bill bans the use of PFAS in certain food packaging, requires cookware manufacturers to disclose the use of PFAS and other hazardous chemicals in their products, and prohibits misleading marketing claims.

BACKGROUND

PFAS, a chemical class which includes over 9000 individual chemicals, has been detected in the blood of over 98 percent of Americans, as well as our air, food, water, soil, wildlife and consumer products. Estimates vary, but dietary intake and inhalation of contaminated indoor air and dust are thought to be among the primary sources of human exposure to PFAS. Exposure to these chemicals is linked to numerous health problems, including breast and other cancers, hormone disruption, kidney and liver damage, thyroid disease, harm to developing infants and children, and immune system disruption.

Food Packaging: PFAS used in food packaging presents a unique risk to humans because it can migrate from the package into the food. When PFAS-treated food packaging is composted, the PFAS contaminates the compost, can be absorbed by plants and food crops grown in the compost-treated soil, and can ultimately make their way up the food chain, impacting humans. Manufacturers intentionally treat plant-based food packaging products with PFAS for grease, oil, or water resistance qualities. These products can expose humans to PFAS during their manufacturing, use, and disposal.

Cookware: Many cookware label statements mislead buyers into believing the pots or pans that they are buying are made without hazardous chemicals. For instance, some labels make the marketing claim “PFOA free,” which refers to one specific PFAS chemical, even though the cookware may contain other PFAS

chemicals. This sends a false message to the buyer that the product does not contain any toxic chemicals. Consumers cannot make informed purchases or easily avoid deceptive marketing unless the cookware is accurately labeled and alerts the presence of harmful chemicals.

Candidate Chemical List: The Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) developed an informational list of ~2,300 Candidate Chemicals to identify potential Chemicals of Concern in Priority Products. The DTSC evaluates for certain adverse impacts and exposure criteria. This list allows manufacturers and consumers to be better informed about chemicals found in products.

THIS BILL

This bill reduces human exposure to and environmental contamination from PFAS and other potentially harmful chemicals by:

1. Banning the sale of plant-based food packaging containing PFAS in California,
2. Requiring cookware sold in California to disclose the presence of any hazardous chemicals from the DTSC’s Candidate Chemical List, and
3. Prohibiting misleading advertising on cookware claiming a product is free of a specific hazardous chemical when other similar chemicals are present.

SUPPORT

Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (Co-sponsor)
Center for Environmental Health (Co-sponsor)
Clean Water Action (Co-sponsor)
Environmental Working Group (Co-sponsor)
Natural Resources Defense Council (Co-sponsor)

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