



# **Senate Unanimously Passes Duckworth, Peters Bipartisan Bill to Reduce the Spread of Toxic “Forever Chemicals” at Commercial Airports**

September 9 2022 10:51 AM



WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Gary Peters (MI) announced that bipartisan legislation to reduce the spread of toxic per- and

polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination at commercial airports passed the U. S. Senate unanimously this week. The [\*Preventing PFAS Runoff at Airports Act\*](#) would deploy more existing Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding for commercial airports to purchase devices necessary to test their firefighting equipment without discharging toxic PFAS chemicals. This legislation would encourage commercial airports to purchase the relatively low-cost devices—also referred to as an input-based testing system—to help limit and prevent exposure to PFAS, which are known as “forever chemicals” because they do not naturally break down. It would also direct the FAA to identify options for reimbursing airports elsewhere that already acquired the devices without federal funding.

“We’ve known for decades that some PFAS chemicals pose a dangerous risk to public health,” said Duckworth. “Despite this knowledge, we’ve continued to use these harmful foams to put out fires—especially at airports—and continued to allowed them to seep into our ground, our water and ultimately to our neighbors and loved ones. We need to do more to reduce the spread of toxic PFAS contamination using common-sense solutions that are already available, which is why I’m proud this important bill passed the Senate and hope it can quickly become law.”

“There are commonsense, fiscally responsible steps we can take to further mitigate PFAS contamination,” said Peters. “I’m pleased my bipartisan *Preventing PFAS Runoff at Airports Act* passed the Senate, because it would incentivize commercial airports nationwide to use existing federal funds to buy testing equipment that prevents the spread of PFAS contamination into the surrounding environment. The bill would also make this equipment more affordable, while protecting our airports, first responders, families, and the Great Lakes – and I’ll push to get it signed into law.”

Along with Duckworth and Peters, U.S. Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) also helped introduce this legislation.

“Commercial airports should have the necessary equipment to test their firefighting equipment in a manner that does not expose firefighters or the surrounding communities to toxic PFAS foams,” said Moran. “Passing this legislation in the Senate is the first step to promote the health and wellness of firefighters and aviation employees at commercial airports, as well as protect the communities that surround them.”

“The FAA requires regular testing of firefighting equipment, which may put undue burdens on regional, commercial airports, and lead to the discharge of harmful chemicals like PFAS,” said Capito. “Specifically, the Preventing PFAS Runoff at Airports Act would benefit several airports in West Virginia – like Yeager, Greenbrier, and Mid-Ohio Valley – and improve overall safety of their operations. I’m pleased my

colleagues joined our effort to advance this legislation in the Senate, recognizing the importance of testing airport rescue and firefighting equipment without dispersing dangerous PFAS chemicals into the environment.”

“As we work to ensure the safety of all travelers and airport workers, reducing the spread of toxic substances must be a priority,” said Klobuchar. “This bill will make a real difference by aiding airports in obtaining the equipment needed to help prevent toxic substance contamination. Now that it has passed the Senate, I look forward to it being signed into law.”

“PFAS contaminations around airports is a serious problem with a very easy solution. With simple testing solutions that are already funded under the Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) Airport Improvement Program, we can protect the environment without creating more burdensome regulations on small airports around Wyoming,” said Lummis. “I am thrilled this important legislation passed the Senate, and I hope the House will pass it quickly. Thank you Senator Peters for your work on this legislation.”

Duckworth’s bipartisan *Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act DWWIA*) was [signed into law](#) as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and it will enable communities to repair and modernize failing wastewater systems, better protect families from forever chemicals like PFAS, and deliver environmental justice to communities in every corner of the state that have been ignored for too long—all while creating good-paying, local jobs. Along with DWWIA’s significant increases to State Revolving Funds used to build and update water and wastewater infrastructure, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal also includes \$15 billion to replace lead service lines and [\\$10 billion for the treatment of PFAS](#) nationwide.