



June 6, 2022

The Honorable Ben Allen
Chair, Senate Environmental Quality Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1817 (Ting) – Safer Clothes & Textiles Act of 2022 – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Allen:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are pleased to support AB 1817, which would phase out toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in clothes and textiles sold in California.

PFAS are a class of approximately 9,000 man-made chemicals used for a wide range of purposes, including in clothes and textiles. PFAS are called “forever” chemicals because they are extremely resistant to breaking down or break down into other toxic PFAS. Consequently, they persist in the environment indefinitely and bioaccumulate in our bodies and other living organisms. They also move around easily through the environment, making them difficult to control. Virtually all Americans have PFAS in their bodies. PFAS have been linked to severe health problems, including but not limited to breast and other cancers, hormone disruption, kidney and liver damage, thyroid disease, harm to developing infants and children, and immune system disruption. Indeed, health organizations such as the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics, IFIGO, have called for phasing out all unnecessary uses of PFAS.

PFAS are released into the environment when products containing them, including clothes and textiles, are manufactured, used, cleaned, and disposed of. Californians are exposed to them when they work with PFAS or PFAS-containing products, use PFAS-containing products in their homes, drink PFAS-contaminated water, eat PFAS-contaminated food, and breathe PFAS pollution in the air. The textile industry, which includes products like apparel, footwear, bedding, draperies, and upholstery, primarily uses PFAS for water and stain repellency. A particular concern regarding PFAS in clothing is the contamination that can occur when these products are washed and the wastewater is released into our environment. In California, water systems serving up to 16 million people have already been found to have PFAS contamination, and contamination is more prevalent in disadvantaged communities. This is just one of many ways in which clothing and textiles can lead to PFAS exposures throughout their lifecycle, from production to disposal.

The entire class of PFAS chemicals has been recognized as chemicals of concern by a wide array of scientific experts at the state, federal, and international levels. The California legislature recognized the need to regulate PFAS as a class when it passed SB 1044 (Allen, 2020), AB 1200 (Ting, 2021), and AB 652 (Friedman, 2021) to prohibit their use in firefighting foam, paper-based food packaging, and children’s products, respectively. The Department of Toxic Substances Control’s (DTSC) Safer Consumer Products Program has done an extensive review of PFAS chemicals in proposals for two product categories and made a convincing case for treating PFAS as a class. The Biomonitoring California Program also includes the entire class of PFAS on their priority chemical list. The U.S. Congress took a class approach to PFAS when it banned the use of all PFAS in military Meals Ready-to-Eat. The growing and international public, medical, scientific and political concern about PFAS pollution has risen to unprecedented heights and has recently become even more pointed due to concerns about how PFAS may reduce the immune system’s response to vaccinations as we cope with a worldwide pandemic.


Recognizing the health and environmental concerns about PFAS in textiles, many leading companies, like Levi’s, Gap, H&M, Puma, Keen, Osprey, Patagonia, Jack Wolfskin, Ikea, and Zara, have either eliminated or made commitments to eliminate PFAS from their products. It’s time to require the rest of the industry to phase out this unnecessary use of PFAS, just as California has required the elimination of PFAS in paper-based food packaging, children’s products, and fire-fighting foam, to protect our health, drinking water, and environment.

AB 1817 would address the problem and make the clothes and textiles that come into our homes and workplaces safer for our health and environment by phasing out the use of PFAS in these products. For these reasons, we strongly support AB 1817.

Sincerely,



Andria Ventura
Legislative and Policy Director
Clean Water Action



Nancy Buermeier
Director of Program and Policy
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners



Leslie Mintz Tamminen
Director
Seventh Generation Advisors



Katie Huffling
Executive Director
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments



Jayla Burton
Program Manager
Breast Cancer Action



Raj Dhillon
Senior Manager, Advocacy & Public Policy
Breathe Southern California



Avi Kar
Sr. Attorney & Director, State Health Policy
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)



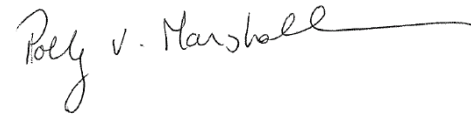
Anna Cummins
Interim Executive Director & Co-Founder
The 5 Gyres Institute



David Diaz
Executive Director
Active San Gabriel Valley



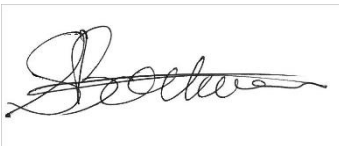
Joe Neugebauer
Vice-Chair
Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group



Polly Marshall
Executive Director
Breast Cancer Over Time



Rhonda Smith
Executive Director
California Black Health Network



Sean Bothwell
Executive Director
California Coastkeeper Alliance



Jenn Engstrom
State Director
California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG)



Jonathan Evans
Environmental Health Legal Director
Center for Biological Diversity



Ana Gonzalez
Interim Executive Director
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice



Christopher Chin
Executive Director
The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education (COARE)



Lenny Siegel
Executive Director
Center for Public Environmental Oversight



Kevin Hamilton
Co-Executive Director
Central California Asthma Collaborative



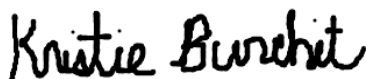
Bobbi Wilding
Executive Director
Clean and Healthy New York



Jaclyn Bowen
Executive Director
Clean Label Project



Mark Rossi, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Clean Production Action



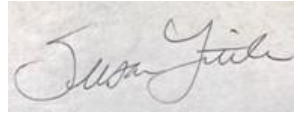
Kristie Sepulveda-Burchit
Executive Director
Educate. Advocate.



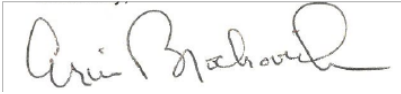
Marc Carrel
President & CEO
Emphysema Foundation of America

Theodora Scarato

Theodora Scarato
Executive Director
Environmental Health Trust



Susan Little
Senior Advocate, California Government Affairs
Environmental Working Group



Erin Brockovich
Founder
Erin Brockovich Foundation



Catherine J Dodd PhD RN
Policy Advisor
FACTS Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics
Safety



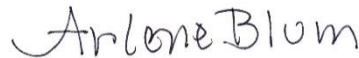
Jim Lindburg
Legislative Consultant
Friends Committee on Legislation of California



Marcie Keever
Oceans & Vessels Program Director
Friends of the Earth



Todd Larsen
Executive Co-Director for Consumer & Corporate
Engagement
Green America



Arlene Blum
PhD
Green Science Policy Institute



Emily Parker
Coastal and Marine Scientist
Heal the Bay



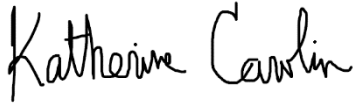
Robert W. Bowcock
Managing Director
Integrated Resource Management, Inc.



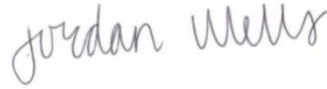
Michael K. Claiborne
Directing Attorney
Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability



Sydney Cook
Director of Science & Research
MADE SAFE



Katherine Carvlin
Executive Director
National Association of Environmental Medicine
(NAEM)



Jordan Wells
Director of Advocacy and Communications
National Stewardship Action Council



David Krueger
President
Northern California Recycling Association



Michael Rincon
Water and Toxics Policy Manager
Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles



Julie Andersen
Global Executive Director
Plastic Oceans International



Dianna Cohen
Chief Executive Officer
Plastic Pollution Coalition



Sarah Doll
National Director
Safer States



Robert M. Gould, MD
President
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility



Sejal Choksi-Chugh
Executive Director
San Francisco Baykeeper



Erica Donnelly-Greenan
Executive Director
Save Our Shores



Laura Anthony
Program Coordinator
Save the Albatross Coalition



Erin Woolley
Policy Advocate
Sierra Club California



Shaney Darden
Founder
The Keep A Breast Foundation



Miriam Gordon
Policy Director
UPSTREAM



Andrew Clough
Deputy General Manager
West County Wastewater



Mati Waiya
Executive Director
Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation



Jamie McConnell
Deputy Director
Women's Voices for the Earth



Stephen Knight
Executive Director
Worksafe



Leslie Lukacs
Executive Director
Zero Waste Sonoma



Ruth Abbe
President
Zero Waste USA



Uriel Saldivar
Senior Policy Advocate
Community Water Center