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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Sues 3M, Dupont, and Other Chemical Manufacturers for PFAS Contamination of Maryland’s Waters and Other Natural Resources

BALTIMORE, MD (May 30, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced two lawsuits, filed on behalf of the State of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Environment, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Maryland Department of Health, seeking to hold multiple chemical manufacturers accountable for widespread and continuing contamination of Maryland’s natural resources and harm to public health. The lawsuits allege that through the manufacture, marketing, and sale of toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), or “forever chemicals,” these corporations, including 3M, DuPont, and others, caused PFAS contamination of the State’s environment through multiple pathways and put Maryland residents’ health at risk.

One [lawsuit](#) addresses contamination caused by PFAS present in aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), more commonly referred to as “firefighting foam,” which has been used for decades by the U.S. military, airports, industrial facilities, and local fire departments. The second [lawsuit](#) addresses contamination caused by PFAS from non-AFFF sources, including but not limited to a myriad of consumer products, and which were introduced into Maryland’s environment through industrial facilities, the use and disposal of these products, landfills receiving PFAS-containing waste, and wastewater treatment facilities containing PFAS-contaminated waste streams. Both lawsuits allege that defendants knew the dangers associated with their PFAS products many decades ago. Yet despite that knowledge, they kept the risks secret and failed to alert the State or the public. Rather, they continued to pursue profits through the manufacturing, marketing, and sales of their PFAS products in Maryland.

“Protecting the health and well-being of Marylanders and the environment in which we live and raise our families is one of my top priorities,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “Access to safe drinking water, a clean environment, and the precious natural resources of Maryland will not be jeopardized by those who put profits above public health and safety. These corporations must pay to clean up the damage and be held accountable for the harms they have caused.”

Exposure to PFAS in humans and animals has been linked to several diseases, including kidney and testicular cancer, thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis, high cholesterol, pregnancy-induced

hypertension, and low birth weight, and may also impair the immune system, including the immune response to vaccines. PFAS pose a serious threat to human health, as they are not just present in drinking water, but can also be ingested, inhaled, and even absorbed through the skin. PFAS are estimated to be detectable in the blood stream of 99 percent of the U.S. population.

“Those who would choose to pose a risk to Marylanders' well-being must be held accountable,” **said Gov. Wes Moore.** “By filing these claims, Maryland is making clear that we value health, safety, and preserving our state's precious natural resources for future generations over corporate profits.”

“The Maryland Department of the Environment continues to take aggressive action to identify PFAS risks and address the harm this has caused people across the state,” **said Maryland Department of the Environment Secretary Serena McIlwain.** “We will be relentless in holding to account the companies that threatened public health with PFAS.”

PFAS is a group of over 9,000 human made chemical compounds containing fluorine and carbon atoms. PFAS has been used since the 1940s in industrial settings and in the production of household and commercial products that are heat resistant, stain resistant, and water and oil repellent. The most widely studied PFAS chemicals, PFOS and PFOA, have been shown to be toxic at very low concentrations. They are easily transported through soil and groundwater where they can migrate long distances, including into surface water. PFAS are commonly referred to as “forever chemicals” because they do not readily biodegrade or chemically degrade and remain in the environment for hundreds or even thousands of years.

Both lawsuits allege a number of claims, including defective design, failure to warn, public nuisance, trespass, and negligence. The two complaints seek to recover damages and costs related to the investigation, cleanup, restoration, and treatment of its natural resources from PFAS contamination.

The Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) has made substantial efforts to better understand and reduce the risks to public health associated with PFAS contamination of the State's natural resources. MDE is working to identify additional sources of release of PFAS at Department of Defense locations, wastewater treatment plants, industrial sites, and landfills. Thus, more investigation and work are necessary to determine the full extent of PFAS contamination.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/053023a.pdf>