



June 30, 2021

Dear Department of Ecology,

As you have seen from over 130 comments submitted by people of faith, Earth Ministry and our members statewide care deeply about the wellbeing of our communities and the environment. We see PFAS contamination as a moral issue, and ask that you act swiftly with a strong second alternatives assessment of PFAS in food packaging.

Continued use of toxic PFAS chemicals conflicts with our values of environmental justice and safety for all. We know these chemicals are poisoning our bodies and waterways, that safe alternatives exist, and that every bit of delay prolongs community exposure to these “forever chemicals.”

With the upcoming second alternatives assessment for PFAS in food packaging, time is of the essence. It has already been three years since we passed the Healthy Food Packaging Act in 2018. While we navigate implementation, retailers across the country are choosing to stop using products with PFAS, demonstrating that alternatives are widely available. Additionally, cities like Seattle require entirely PFAS-free compostable packaging and several other states are implementing outright bans.

Please consider the abundant options and widespread circulation of PFAS-free food packaging being used in Seattle and voluntarily by many retailers elsewhere as evidence that there are suitable and safe options available. The time is now to require these viable alternatives across all product categories.

We also ask that you accelerate the timeline for the alternatives assessment process because of serious environmental justice concerns. All of the PFAS used in our country's food packaging is made at one plant in Decatur, AL, creating a long history of PFAS pollution contaminating the community's drinking water and farmland. Nearly 80% of the people who live within three miles of this plant are people of color, 51% of whom are Black Americans. This ongoing harm to our human family across the country increases the urgency for Washington to phase out PFAS in food packaging, and compels us to speak out as people of faith who seek justice and wellbeing for all.

Earth Ministry appreciates that Washington is a leader in toxic chemical reform, and we thank the Department of Ecology for your good work through various ongoing mechanisms addressing PFAS, including the PFAS Chemical Action Plan and Safer Products for Washington implementation. We compel you to continue to set a high standard with swift and broad implementation of the second PFAS Food Packaging Alternatives Assessment.

Thank you,
LeeAnne Beres

Executive Director
Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light