

**Sen. Collett**  
**Joint Policy Committee Hearing Remarks**  
**9.6.2024**

Thank you, Chairwoman Muth and Chairman Bizzarro, for organizing and hosting this Joint Policy Committee hearing. Though I am unable to join you all today, there is no question for those of us here in Southeastern Pennsylvania that upholding our constitutional right to clean air and water requires the vigilance and persistence of everyone in our community, all the time.

Prior to redistricting, I had the privilege of representing Warminster Township, where we are gathered today. And when I first ran for office in 2018 and knocked on the doors of my neighbors, PFAS contamination was the number one issue I heard about.

Warminster and the neighboring communities surrounding the Biddle Air Base have seen some of the highest levels of PFAS concentration in the entire nation. We know all too well that sustained and long-term exposure to these “forever chemicals” can lead to higher cholesterol levels, damaged livers, lower birth weights, preeclampsia, kidney, and testicular cancers, and more.

That’s why we must continue our work to reduce unnecessary exposure to the harms of PFAS throughout our society. From firefighting foam to pajamas; from concrete sealers to pizza boxes; from engine oils to our drinking water supply: these man-made chemicals can be found all around us—and not without consequence. Today’s hearing and testimony will allow us to examine the policy options available to the Commonwealth to limit PFAS use where appropriate.

Pennsylvania is on the right side of history. Thanks to the advocacy of many of the concerned advocates and residents in this room and across our region, the Department of Environmental Protection set a Maximum Contaminant Level for several PFAS chemicals for our drinking water – even ahead of standards set by the federal government. And Pennsylvania’s businesses and utility providers have learned how to tackle PFAS filtration. Now, the Commonwealth has an opportunity to lead the way on broad health and safety measures by reducing exposure to PFAS in everyday consumer products and household goods.

And it’s more important than ever that we investigate these options at a state level. Many of us are concerned about what is happening in Arizona where they are dealing with similar PFAS contamination issues after years of exposure to firefighting foams at military bases. There, the Air Force is taking the EPA to court to avoid having to cleanup the PFAS contamination *they* caused following the Supreme Court’s disastrous ruling overturning the Chevron Doctrine.

Because of the Court’s decision to strip administrative judges and agency experts of their regulatory power, it may be years before Arizona ever sees their water cleaned – or, more likely, it may cost regular Arizonans millions of dollars to remediate this pollution before the Air Force is ever held accountable.

We see this and we know that we cannot let that happen in Pennsylvania. We must be prepared to bring our polluters to justice. That’s why I have sponsored legislation with Bucks County Senator Steve Santarsiero to provide our Attorney General with the jurisdiction to initiate charges against polluters for environmental crimes instead of having to wait for a referral from the county District Attorney. District Attorneys who already have too much on their plates and lack the

critical resources or capacity to investigate and initiate these types of cases on their own.

And it's because the folks who have skirted accountability have been so successful in doing so that we have to start looking to eliminate future contamination at the source. We must guard against this unbridled and activist Supreme Court by looking out for our fellow Pennsylvanians and addressing PFAS exposure at the state level.

I am hopeful that today's hearing will begin to shed light on the options available to us. While I regret that I cannot be with you, staff from my office is here and will be available to connect with anyone interested in working with us to protect and uphold *all* our constitutional rights.

Thank you.