



Association of Pacific Island Legislatures

American Samoa
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
FSM, State of Chuuk
FSM, State of Kosrae
FSM, State of Pohnpei
FSM, State of Yap
Island of Guam
Republic of Kiribati
Republic of the Marshall Islands
Republic of Nauru
Republic of Palau
State of Hawaii

A RESOLUTION

Resolution No. 38-GA-05

“Relative to recognizing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), commonly used as a firefighting foam, as a public health concern; to call for the immediate cessation of the use of PFAS as firefighting foam in our islands; and to encouraging the testing of sources of our potable water supplies for the presence of PFAS.”

1 **WHEREAS**, Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of
2 synthetic chemicals that include PFOA, PFOS and other substances manufactured and used in a
3 variety of industries; and

4 **WHEREAS**, in the military and in airports across the United States, PFAS was
5 commonly used in firefighting foams, referred to as Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF). The
6 foam was often used for as practice at fire/crash training areas; and

7 **WHEREAS**, PFAS are referred to as “forever chemicals” because the chemical takes
8 thousands of years to degrade in the environment. The chemicals also persist in the human body
9 and are eliminated slowly, with a half life of 2 to 9 years; and

10 **WHEREAS**, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) are
11 the two most studied PFAS. Exposure to PFOS and PFOA is widespread and global. PFOS and
12 PFOA also persist in the human body and are eliminated slowly. PFOS and PFOA pose adverse
13 effects for human health if ingested and are known to bioaccumulate; and

14 **WHEREAS**, humans can be exposed to the chemicals through food, drinking water, and
15 biodegradation of consumer products. Many municipalities in the United States have issued
16 warnings over exposure to PFAS through consumption of contaminated food sources like fish
17 and deer; and

1 **WHEREAS**, exposure may lead to developmental and reproductive effects to fetuses
2 during pregnancy or breastfed infants, liver effects like tissue damage, immune effects such as
3 depressed antibody production in response to vaccination, cardiovascular effects and changes in
4 cholesterol, thyroid effects, and are considered suggestive for cancer risk including testicular and
5 kidney cancer in humans; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set a Lifetime Health
7 Advisory (LHA) level for two PFAS in drinking water, PFOS and PFOA. The LHA level is 70
8 parts per trillion (ppt, equal to 70 ng/L) for PFOS and PFOA combined, or individually if only
9 one is present. The EPA has not set health advisory levels for other PFAS compounds; and

10 **WHEREAS**, the islands of the APIL Pacific are especially vulnerable to PFAS
11 contamination because of the limited availability of water sources and agricultural land; and

12 **WHEREAS**, because the Federal Aviation Administration conducts airport firefighting
13 training programs throughout the U.S. Pacific Islands and the Freely Associated States and is
14 deeply involved in the equipment and substances to be used by our airport safety personnel in the
15 event of an actual airplane disaster, the Member Jurisdictions of the APIL Members should be
16 especially concerned that PFOS and PFOA will not be a component of these trainings and fire
17 extinguishment incidences; and

18 **WHEREAS**, the presence of these chemicals in the environment of the APIL
19 jurisdictions has now been found on the Island of Guam where three water wells were shut down
20 by the Guam Waterworks Authority in August 2016 because the detectable amount of PFOS in
21 those wells exceeded the updated health advisory from the United States Environmental
22 Protection Agency; and

23 **WHEREAS**, because the health of our people and environment are bearing the burdens
24 of decisions not made by island leaders, it is the sense of the Association of Pacific Island
25 Legislatures that without direct intervention on our part, our island communities will continue to
26 be stigmatized by the potential dangers that these hazardous chemicals represent; now,
27 therefore,

28 **BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures, 38th General
29 Assembly, Republic of the Marshall Islands, July 23-26, 2019, that the Association of Pacific
30 Island Legislatures hereby recognizes perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS),
31 commonly used as a firefighting foam, as a public health concern; and calls for the immediate

1 cessation of the use of PFAS as firefighting foam, especially at our international airports, and
2 further encourages the APIL Member Jurisdictions to undertake the testing of the sources of their
3 potable water supplies for the presence of PFAS; and

4 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the APIL President shall certify and the APIL
5 Secretary shall attest to the adoption hereof, and that copies of the same shall thereafter be
6 transmitted to the Chief Executive and the Legislative Presiding Officers of each Member
7 Jurisdiction of the Association of the Pacific Island Legislatures.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED ON THE 26TH DAY OF JULY, 2019.


NELSON STEPHEN
ACTING PRESIDENT
IVAN A. BLANCO
SECRETARY