

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2525

To require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct a study of personal protective equipment worn by firefighters to determine the prevalence and concentration of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. GARDNER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct a study of personal protective equipment worn by firefighters to determine the prevalence and concentration of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Guaranteeing Equip-
5 ment Safety for Firefighters Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECH-**
2 **NOLOGY STUDY ON PER- AND**
3 **POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES IN PER-**
4 **SONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT WORN BY**
5 **FIREFIGHTERS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
7 enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Insti-
8 tute of Standards and Technology shall, in consultation
9 with the Director of the National Institute for Occupa-
10 tional Safety and Health, commence a study of the con-
11 tents and composition of new and unused personal protec-
12 tive equipment worn by firefighters.

13 (b) CONTENTS OF STUDY.—In carrying out the study
14 required by subsection (a), the Director of the National
15 Institute of Standards and Technology shall examine—

16 (1) the identity, prevalence, and concentration
17 of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly
18 known as “PFAS”) in the personal protective equip-
19 ment worn by firefighters;

20 (2) the conditions and extent to which per- and
21 polyfluoroalkyl substances are released into the envi-
22 ronment over time from the degradation of personal
23 protective equipment from normal use by fire-
24 fighters; and

1 (3) the relative risk of exposure to per- and
2 polyfluoroalkyl substances faced by firefighters
3 from—

4 (A) their use of personal protective equip-
5 ment; and

6 (B) degradation of personal protective
7 equipment from normal use by firefighters.

8 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
9 of the enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit
10 to Congress a report describing—

11 (1) the findings of the Director with respect to
12 the study carried out under subsection (a); and

13 (2) recommendations on what additional re-
14 search or technical improvements to personal protec-
15 tive equipment materials or components should be
16 pursued to avoid unnecessary occupational exposure
17 among firefighters to per- and polyfluoroalkyl sub-
18 stances through personal protective equipment.

19 **SEC. 3. RESEARCH ON PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUB-**
20 **STANCES IN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIP-**
21 **MENT WORN BY FIREFIGHTERS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 540 days after the
23 date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Na-
24 tional Institute of Standards and Technology shall—

1 (1) issue a solicitation for research proposals to
2 carry out the research recommendations identified in
3 the report submitted under section 2(c); and

4 (2) award grants to applicants that submit re-
5 search proposals to develop safe alternatives to per-
6 and polyfluoroalkyl substances in personal protective
7 equipment.

8 (b) CRITERIA.—The Director shall select research
9 proposals to receive a grant under subsection (a) on the
10 basis of merit, using criteria identified by the Director,
11 including the likelihood that the research results will ad-
12 dress the findings of the Director with respect to the study
13 conducted under section 2(a).

14 (c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—Any entity or group of 2
15 or more entities may submit to the Director a research
16 proposal in response to the solicitation for research pro-
17 posals under subsection (a), including—

18 (1) State and local agencies;

19 (2) public institutions, including public institu-
20 tions of higher education;

21 (3) private corporations; and

22 (4) nonprofit organizations.

23 (d) FUNDING.—

24 (1) REQUESTS.—Beginning in the first full fis-
25 cal year following the date of the enactment of this

1 Act, and not less frequently than once each year
2 thereafter for 2 years, the Director may request
3 such funding as the Director considers necessary to
4 carry out this section.

5 (2) LIMITATION.—In carrying out this section,
6 the Director may not expend or obligate more than
7 \$5,000,000 in any 1 fiscal year.

8 **SEC. 4. AUTHORITY FOR DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL IN-**
9 **STITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY**
10 **TO CONSULT WITH EXPERTS ON MATTERS**
11 **RELATING TO PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL**
12 **SUBSTANCES.**

13 In carrying out this Act, the Director of the National
14 Institute of Standards and Technology may consult with
15 Federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, State
16 and local governments, and science and research institu-
17 tions determined by the Director to have scientific or ma-
18 terial interest in reducing unnecessary occupational expo-
19 sure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances by firefighters.

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