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**NYPIRG STATEMENT ON LEGISLATION BANNING BURNING OF TOXIC
FIREFIGHTING FOAM IN COHOES BECOMING LAW**

(Albany, N.Y.) Legislation that prohibits incineration of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) and its associated perfluorocarbon (PFAS) chemicals at the Norlite facility in Cohoes was signed into law by Governor Cuomo late Monday evening. The legislation (S.7880-B Breslin/A.9952-B McDonald) had passed the legislature unanimously on June 9, 2020.

Norlite, a hazardous waste incinerator operating in Cohoes, NY, which is next to a public housing complex and within a DEC designated environmental justice area, signed a five-year contract with the United States Department of Defense to incinerate AFFF. In 2018 and 2019, Norlite burned 2 million pounds of AFFF in its Cohoes facility. According to the Wall Street Journal, the incinerated material came from 60 military facilities in 25 states.¹

This new law is the first of its kind in the country.

The following statement is attributable to Liz Moran, Environmental Policy Director for NYPIRG:

“Thanks to the powerful advocacy of residents in Cohoes, those who live in the Saratoga Sites housing complex, and many allies, New York now has a precedent-setting law to prohibit the burning of toxic PFAS in Cohoes. New York, being the first in the country to have such a law, has set a national standard for what it means to protect the public from these toxic chemicals.

There is no evidence that burning these chemicals is a safe, or effective, way of disposal. In fact, emerging data seems to indicate that this process does not eliminate the chemicals and may disperse them in the air, which threatens water and air quality in neighboring communities. NYPIRG thanks Governor Cuomo for signing this legislation into law and Senator Breslin and Assemblyman McDonald for being strong advocates for this legislation. Now that Cohoes is safe from this dangerous practice, the state should consider a statewide ban of this practice and continue adopting policies to protect public health from toxic PFAS chemicals.”

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¹ Kris Maher, “New York Town Discovers a Possibly Toxic Problem,” Wall Street Journal, May 20, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-york-town-discovers-a-possibly-toxic-problem-11589987031>