

**MS Thesis**  
**Department of Environmental Science and Policy**  
**College of Science**  
**George Mason University**

**Candidate:** Charlotte Dobry

**Defense Date and Time:** April 30, 2024 at 2:00pm

**Defense Location:** David King Hall, Room 3006

**Title:** Examining the Emergence of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances as a Federal Policy Topic

**Thesis Director:** Dr. Younsung Kim

**Committee:** Dr. Scott Glaberman, Dr. Jennifer Salerno

**ABSTRACT**

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), referred to as “forever chemicals”, include approximately 15,000 chemicals. PFAS have applications in household and industrial settings and are widely found in drinking water. Data about PFAS’ environmental persistence and human health risks have appeared since the beginning of this century, but regulatory policies have been slow to evolve. Using multiple streams theory, this study reviewed Congressional bills and surveyed stakeholders to identify components that shaped how PFAS has been framed as a policy agenda topic. The research outcomes illuminate the policymaking process of emerging contaminants and their regulatory controls at the federal level.