# POPRC-18/7: Process for the evaluation of perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 6 of part III of Annex B to the Convention

*The Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee,*

*Recalling* decision SC-6/4, by which the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants adopted a process, set out in the annex to that decision, for the evaluation of perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 6 of part III of Annex B to the Stockholm Convention,

1. *Decides* to submit the recommendations on the continued need for those chemicals set out in the annex to the present decision and the report on the assessment of alternatives to perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride[1] to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its eleventh meeting;

2. *Requests* the Secretariat to finalize its report on the evaluation of information on perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride,[2] on the basis of comments and suggestions provided by the Committee and taking into account the discussions at the eighteenth meeting of the Committee, and to submit it to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its eleventh meeting.

## Annex to decision POPRC-18/7

## Recommendations on the continued need for perfluorooctane sulfonic acid, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride

## A. Acceptable purpose

**Insect baits with sulfluramid (CAS No. 4151-50-2) as an active ingredient for control of leaf-cutting ants from Atta spp. and Acromyrmex spp., for agricultural use only:**

1. The acceptable purpose for "insect baits for control of leaf-cutting ants from *Atta* spp. and *Acromyrmex* spp." was amended in decision SC-9/4 to "insect baits with sulfluramid (CAS No. 4151-50-2) as an active ingredient for control of leaf-cutting ants from *Atta* spp. and *Acromyrmex* spp. for agricultural use only".

2. There is a wide range of commercially available alternatives (pesticides) on the market and various techniques for application (e.g., dry powder formulation) have been developed. Non-chemical (mechanical, cultural, and biological) control methods have been developed but are not fully commercialised or available in all locations.

3. The Committee encourages additional research and development of alternatives and, where alternatives are available, urges that they be implemented, and additional research and development of alternatives carried out, while maintaining the acceptable purpose for the time being.

4. The Committee further encourages Parties to consider monitoring activities for sulfluramid, perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) and other relevant degradation products in the different environmental compartments (soil, ground water, surface water) of the application sites.

[1] UNEP/POPS/POPRC.18/INF/19/Rev.1.

[2] UNEP/POPS/POPRC.18/INF/20.

## B. Specific exemptions

### (a) Metal plating (hard metal plating) only in closed-loop systems:

5. Taking into account the availability of alternatives for PFOS, its salts and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride (PFOSF) and the recommendation by the Committee, the Conference of the Parties amended the exemptions for metal plating in decision SC-9/4 to limit the specific exemption under the listing to "metal plating (hard metal plating) only in closed-loop systems" and delete the acceptable purpose.

6. A range of short-chain fluorinated (e.g., 6:2 FTS) and fluorine-free alternatives are commercially available; chemical composition known and trade names identified in many cases. Fluorine-free alternatives are still the subject of research and development activity and are less readily available. A number of process-based approaches to replace PFOS have also been identified and are commercially available e.g., the High Velocity Oxygen Fuel (HVOF) process. Chromium (III) plating is available as an alternative to chromium (VI) plating for some decorative plating applications.

7. Noting that the specific exemption is time-limited, the Committee recommends that Parties consider not replacing the use of PFOS, its salts and PFOSF for hard metal plating with chemicals that may exhibit the characteristics of persistent organic pollutants as specified in Annex D, including degradation products.

### (b) Fire-fighting foam for liquid fuel vapour suppression and liquid fuel fires (class B fires) in installed systems, including both mobile and fixed systems:

8. The industry standard for fire-fighting foams is rapidly switching from C8 fluorinated compounds towards fluorine-free substances or to short-chain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs), mainly 6:2 fluorotelomer compounds. A large number of alternative fluorinated and fluorine-free substances are available on the commercial market, with trade names and chemical composition known in some cases. Many products are available for which trade names are known but chemical formulation is not, due to trade secrets. Alternative processes and practices have also been developed to minimize the release of PFOS from certain applications e.g., training operations.

9. The assessment indicated that alternatives to PFOS-based fire-fighting foam are readily available in many countries and have been demonstrated to be technically feasible and economically viable but some have potential negative environmental and health impacts. On that basis, a specific exemption is available for the use of PFOS, its salts and PFOSF for fire-fighting foam for liquid fuel vapour suppression and liquid fuel fires (Class B fires) already in installed systems, including both mobile and fixed systems, and with the same conditions as those specified in paragraph 2 (a)–(d) and 3 of the annex to decision POPRC-14/2 on perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts and PFOA-related compounds.

10. The Committee recognized that a transition to the use of short-chain PFAS for dispersive applications such as fire-fighting foam is not a suitable option from an environmental and human health point of view and that some time may be needed for a transition to alternatives without PFASs.