MSA Press Room

Globe Manufacturing Company Supports Bipartisan PFAS Alternatives Act

Legislation focuses on driving innovation to accelerate development of next-generation PFAS-free materials for firefighter turnout gear

PITTSFIELD, N.H., July 20, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI) along with Representatives Sam Graves (R-MO), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Thomas Kean, Jr. (R-NJ), Dina Titus (D-NV), Anthony D'Esposito (R-NY), Glenn Ivey (D-MD), and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) introduced the Protecting Firefighters and Advancing State-of-the-Art Alternatives Act (the "PFAS Alternatives Act"). The bipartisan bill would support the development of next-generation safety materials for firefighter turnout gear that are free of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Globe Manufacturing Company, one of several U.S. companies that makes structural turnout gear for firefighters, supports the PFAS Alternatives Act because it will help the industry meet firefighters' call for PFAS-free gear. Bob Apel, Globe's Chief Operating Officer, said that "Globe applauds and supports the outstanding bipartisan leadership of Representatives Debbie Dingell, Sam Graves, Suzanne Bonamici, Tom Kean, Jr., Dina Titus, Anthony D'Esposito, Glenn Ivey, and Brian Fitzpatrick for their commitment to develop innovative, next-generation materials for firefighter turnout gear and address the demand for PFAS-free materials. Globe looks forward to continuing its long-term advocacy efforts working with congressional champions, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and other stakeholders to promote this investment in innovation and pass the PFAS Alternatives Act."

The purpose of the PFAS Alternatives Act is "[t]o drive innovation in developing next-generation protection for firefighters by accelerating the development of PFAS-free turnout gear." The legislation would support:

- The development and testing of PFAS-free turnout gear materials.
- Guidance and training on the proper use and maintenance of next-generation turnout gear.
- Development of other innovations that can reduce the inherent dangers firefighters face, including enhanced protection against exposure to particulates and byproducts of combustion.

Structural turnout gear is designed to provide critical protection against burn injuries and other hazards over a wide range of conditions while minimizing heat stress to the firefighter. The gear is comprised of three layers—an outer shell, moisture barrier, and thermal liner. Each layer is independently tested against standards set by the National Fire Protection Association ("NFPA") to ensure that they can withstand the harsh environments to which firefighters may be exposed. The combined ensemble provides protection against fireground hazards including heat, flames, water, oil, chemicals, and bloodborne pathogens.

Meeting the demand for PFAS-free turnout gear has been a challenge for the industry. Currently, no company that makes firefighter protective clothing is able to meet NFPA performance standards while offering turnout coats or pants that are entirely PFAS free. All NFPA-compliant moisture barriers available on the market today contain PFAS in some form. The PFAS Alternatives Act will provide support to address this opportunity for innovation, complementing private sector efforts already underway.

Globe will remain actively engaged on this issue, continuing its 136-year commitment to meet the evolving needs of firefighters by delivering high-quality, high-performance turnout gear built from state-of-the-art materials.

Background

Established in 1887, Globe is a New Hampshire-based company focused on making innovative protective apparel for firefighters. Globe itself does not add PFAS to its products. The company builds turnout gear from technical fabrics sourced from a small pool of specialty textile manufacturers that supply all U.S. turnout gear producers. In early 2021, thanks to innovations from the textile industry, Globe announced the availability of new outer shell materials made with a PFAS-free Durable Water Repellent (DWR). While the progress on outer shells has been encouraging, and the thermal liners that Globe offers are made without PFAS, identifying PFAS alternatives for moisture barriers continues to be an industry challenge. One industry textile supplier has recently announced a new alternative moisture barrier material. Globe is working with the supplier on testing and validation of the new material, which Globe plans to offer once it is available.

Globe Manufacturing Company, LLC is a subsidiary of MSA Safety Incorporated (NYSE: MSA). Established in 1914, MSA is the global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of safety products that help protect workers and facility infrastructures.

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