

Good morning, My name is Marie-Pierre Huguet and I am a Bennington county resident. I am an educator. I got my PhD in Curriculum and Instruction from the University at Albany. Though I started as a teacher, I became an instructional designer. I am currently working remotely for a company based in Texas. I design online instruction for Tier 1 universities and training for a variety of organizations.

As you might have guessed, I'm not originally from here. I came to Vermont over 30 years ago. For six months. I never left. I fell in love with Vermont. And yeah, I got married and all that, but my first love was this green mountain state. This is home. I consider myself a first-generation Vermonter and as such I am a concerned citizen who cares very deeply about what happens in my state and to my fellow Vermonters.

My husband and I built our home in North Bennington in the early nineties. He was a carpenter at the time, so he did the majority of the work himself. Fellow craftsmen helped, of course, because this is what you do in Vermont, you help each other.

In mid-February 2016, I was in my kitchen, putting away our dinner dishes, looking at our vegetable garden, wondering if there was anything I could get from the cold frame when I saw two men coming down our driveway. Richard Spies and one of his colleagues from the Vermont DEC were randomly testing water from wells located near Chemfab in North Bennington. He explained that a concerned citizen had reached out to their local representative after hearing about PFOA contamination in the neighboring village of Hoosick Falls, NY. This testing was, of course, just out of an abundance of caution. This was Vermont, after all, no way was there any possibility of contamination. We felt a little smug and, dare I say, superior to our NY neighbors. I remember Richard and I bantering about it. A few days later, a slightly panicked lady from the DEC called, telling us to stop drinking our water immediately and to try not to breathe when taking a shower. Have you ever tried that? Doesn't work. The amount of PFOA they found in our well was 580 part per trillion. The second, more scientific test revealed 780 ppt. Two of the highest levels found in our neighborhood.

More tests took place, more contamination was discovered. Our community got organized and joined a class-action lawsuit. Neighbors and friends volunteered to be class representatives, allowing their lives to be dissected and made public for the good of their community. We got our blood tested. My husband had a PFOA blood level of 305. Mine was 415. That is a heck of a lot more than the 2.08 micrograms per liter accepted level.

Medical monitoring was a critical part of the class-action lawsuit and after more than five years, a settlement was finally announced for the people in Bennington affected by PFOA contamination.

I will be one of the beneficiaries of this medical monitoring. However, my husband, William Sayer Sumner Jr., known by all as Sandy, will not. Sandy died on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 of an undifferentiated pleomorphic sarcoma. Sandy believed very strongly that this extremely rare, extremely aggressive cancer was caused by PFOA.

I know, we don't know that for sure, but that is one of the things that medical monitoring will help us with: collecting data and allowing us to make informed decisions about our health. Would medical monitoring have saved Sandy's life? Of course not. His was too rare a cancer. But had medical monitoring been in place a year or two ago, I have no doubts that we would have had more than five months to plan for a life without Sandy.

S.113 is one opportunity that we have to help protect Vermonters from going through what Bennington county went through with the PFOA contamination. It would provide them with legal recourse when directly affected by the release of toxic contaminants into their environment. I consider this to be a basic right for anyone and I am not sure I understand the tremendous push back from industry towards medical monitoring.

I have tremendous respect for what our manufacturers bring to our communities, especially to Southwest Vermont. I can appreciate their concerns about the financial impact medical monitoring might have on them. I am not however, willing to give them a free pass should they not properly control toxic emissions. Why should those who get impacted by their mistakes bear the burden of the consequences?

Through no fault of our own, I lost my husband. I lost my quality of life. I had to sell my home. And I will worry about my health for the rest of my life. And all I did, was drink water. I do not want any Vermonter, or anyone for that matter to go through what we went through.

I would like to end my testimonial with words from my husband, spoken on June 8, 2019 a few days before Governor Scott vetoed the first medical monitoring bill, S.37. I sincerely hope he truly hears us today, and unlike last time he signs the bill because it is about Vermonters taking care of Vermonters.

"Gov. Scott is threatening to veto this medical monitoring bill because he fears it would introduce needless complications for Vermont business. Because of political compromise, this bill as it stands is already weighted heavily in favor of

the business community, asking victims of chemical contamination to jump through many hoops in order to earn access to medical monitoring. Still, the governor finds it too burdensome for businesses. I actually can't believe we have to fight for this, I wouldn't want the governor or any of his loved ones to walk in our shoes, but I have to think if he did, his perspective would be very different."

Let's just hope this is not déjà vu all over again. Let's get S.113 signed for the good of all Vermonters.

Thank you for listening to me today, and thank you Sen. Sears and Sen. Campion, you truly are Vermonters.