

1 Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI)

2 **Removal of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs) from Contaminated**
3 **Groundwater using Granular Activated Carbon: A Pilot-Scale Study with Breakthrough**
4 **Modeling**

5
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17 **Environmental Science: Water Research and Technology**

25	<u>Table of Contents</u>	
26		
27	1.0 Analytical Sample Prep	3
28	2.0 GAC Column Parameters	4
29	Table S1. GAC column parameters.....	4
30	Figure S1. Pilot system process diagram.	5
31	3.0 Modeling Input	5
32	Table S2. Fixed column model input parameters.....	5
33	Table S3. Compound specific model inputs.....	6
34	3.1 Dispersion Coefficient Calculation	6
35	3.2 Intraparticle Porosity Calculation	7
36	3.3 Instantaneous Sorption Equilibrium Model	7
37	Table S4. Independent and dependent column model variables and parameters and their dimensions	
38	for the instantaneous sorption equilibrium model.	7
39	3.3.1 Calculated Column Properties	8
40	3.3.2 Differential Equation	9
41	3.4 Intraparticle Diffusion Model	10
42	Table S5. Independent and dependent column model variables and parameters and their dimensions	
43	for the intraparticle diffusion model.	10
44	3.4.1 Calculated Column Properties	11
45	3.4.2 Differential Equations	11
46	3.5 Influent Concentration	14
47	Figure S2. Influent concentration over time.	14
48	3.6 Modeling Output Results	14
49	Table S6. Equilibrium model derived K_d and SSR values.	14
50	Table S7. Intraparticle diffusion model derived K_d and SSR values at $\tau = 1$	15
51	Figure S3. Effect of the tortuosity on the best fit K_d for the intraparticle diffusion model using	
52	GCN1240 breakthrough results for four different compounds, PFPeA, PFOA, PFPeS, and PFOS.	15
53	Table S8. SSR at different tortuosity values for selected compounds in GCN1240 pilot data.	16
54	Figure S4. Equilibrium model fits to data.	16
55	Figure S5. Intraparticle diffusion model fits to data.	17
56	3.7 Linear Regressions from Model Outputs	17
57	Table S9. Equilibrium model linear regression fits.....	18
58	Table S10. Intraparticle diffusion model linear regression fits at $\tau = 1$	18
59	Table S11. K_d value comparison between Xiao et al. 2017 ³ and EQ model predictions.	19
60	References	19

61 **1.0 Analytical Sample Prep**

62 All samples were collected in 15 mL pre-weighed polypropylene Falcon (Corning, NY) tubes.
63 The following reagents were added: 63.8% water sample, 3.3% Fisher Scientific Optima LCMS
64 grade water (Hampton, NH) mixed with 0.1% of Optima LCMS grade ammonium hydroxide,
65 13.6% Optima LCMS grade methanol, 9.6% of Optima LCMS grade isopropanol surrogate
66 mixture, and 9.6% of Optima LCMS grade methanol surrogate mixture. All reagents were
67 prepared in the original sampling vial to mitigate transfer losses. Surrogate concentrations were
68 spiked at 74 pg/mL and 1.35 mL of sample was transferred into a 1.5 mL autosampler vial.

69

70 1mL of sample was injected in a SCIEX X500R QTOF System (Framingham, MA). The
71 analytical column used was Phenomenex Gemini C18, 3mm x 100mm x 5 μ m (Torrance, CA).
72 Prior to the column, a Phenomenex C18 SecurityGuard™ 4mm x 2mm (Torrance, CA) and two
73 Agilent Zorbax 4.6 mm x 12.5 mm x 6 μ m DIOL guard columns (Santa Clara, CA) were used. A
74 Phenomenex Luna 5 μ m C18(2) 100 Å LC column 30 x 3 mm (Torrance, CA) was used as a
75 delay column to aid in chromatographic separation. The column oven temperature was set to 40C.
76 The eluent mobile phases used were (A) Optima LCMS grade water with 20mM Fisher
77 Scientific HPLC grade ammonium acetate (Hampton, NH) and (B) 100% Optima LCMS grade
78 methanol. The autosampler rinse solution was 100% Optima LCMS grade isopropanol. Eluent
79 flow rate was held at 0.60 mL/min, and composition was ramped from 90% A to 50% A over the
80 first 0.5 minutes, then to 1.0% A at 8 minutes and held until 13 minutes, then ramped to 90% A
81 at 13.5 minutes and held to 20 minutes.

82

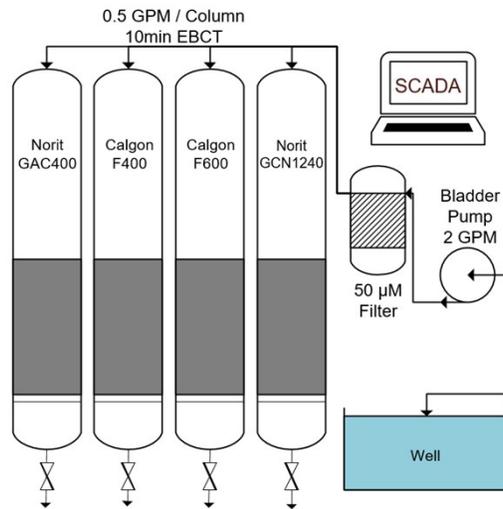
83 Electrospray ionization in negative mode (ESI-) with SWATH® Data-Independent Acquisition
84 for both TOFMS and MS/MS mode were used. Precursor ion data was collected for m/z 100-
85 1200 for 1283 cycles with a total scan time of 842 ms and accumulation time of 20 ms, with ion
86 spray voltage set at - 4500 V and temperature set to 550 °C. The ion source, curtain, and collision
87 (CAD) gas were set to 60 psi, 35 psi, and 10 psi, respectively. For QTOF scanning, the collision
88 energy was set to -5 V and the declustering potential to -20 V, both with no spread. Product ion
89 (MS/MS) scanning was conducted for m/z 50-1200 Da. The accumulation time for each SWATH
90 window is 50 ms and collision energy was -35 V with 30 V spread. The instrument was mass
91 calibrated every 5 injections using SCIEX ESI Negative Calibration Solution.

92 **2.0 GAC Column Parameters**

93 **Table S1.** GAC column parameters.

GAC Height	45 in
Column Diameter	5.71 in
Flowrate/Column	0.5 gpm
Total Bed Volume	18.88 L
Total Run Time	1841.59 hr
Hydraulic Loading Rate	2.8 gpm/ft ²
Empty Bed Contact Time	10 min

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95

96

Figure S1. Pilot system process diagram.

97

98 3.0 Modeling Input

99

Table S2. Fixed column model input parameters.

	F400	GAC400	F600	GCN1240
Column Length (m)	1.143	1.143	1.143	1.143
Inner Column Radius (m)	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073
Total Dry Mass of GAC (kg)	10.1967	9.2525	11.7073	9.6302
Flow Through Column (m ³ /s)	3.15E-05	3.15E-05	3.15E-05	3.15E-05
Dispersion Coefficient (m ² /s)	9.77E-06	9.85E-06	1.08E-05	8.75E-06
Skeletal Density of GAC (kg/m ³)	2200	2200	2200	2200
Radius of GAC (m)	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065
Intraparticle Porosity	0.59	0.63	0.53	0.61

100

101

Table S3. Compound specific model inputs.

	Molecular Weight (g/mol)	Avg. Influent Concentration (mM)
PFPeA	264.07	5.62187E-08
PFHxA	314.07	5.60266E-08
PFHpA	364.07	1.46478E-08
PFOA	414.07	5.08504E-08
PFPrS	250.13	1.25937E-08
PFBS	300.13	7.47829E-09
PFPeS	350.13	2.95955E-08
PFHxS	400.13	1.02123E-07
PFHpS	450.13	2.52849E-09
PFOS	500.13	9.89414E-08

102

103 3.1 Dispersion Coefficient Calculation

104 The dispersion coefficient was calculated based on the Chung and Wen equation^{1, 2}

$$105 \quad \frac{D_{disp}\rho_w}{\mu_w} = \frac{Re}{0.2 + 0.011Re^{0.48}} \quad (\text{eq 1})$$

106 where D_{disp} is the dispersion coefficient (m^2/s), ρ_w is the density of water at 14C 999.2 (kg/m^3),

107 μ_w is the viscosity of water at 14 °C, 0.0010518 (Pa s), and Re is the Reynolds number.

108 The Reynolds number was defined as

$$109 \quad Re = \frac{\rho_w v d_p}{\mu_w} \quad (\text{eq 2})$$

110 where v is the interstitial velocity (m/s), and d_p is the particle diameter (m).

111 Interstitial velocity was defined as

112
$$v = \frac{Q}{\pi r_p^2 n} \text{ (eq 3)}$$

113 where Q is the flowrate (m³/s), r is the particle radius (r), and n is particle porosity.

114

115 **3.2 Intraparticle Porosity Calculation**

116 Intraparticle porosity was defined as

117
$$n = \frac{V_{pores}}{V_{particles}} \text{ (eq 4)}$$

118 where n is the porosity, V_{pores} is the volume of the particle pores, and V_{particles} is the volume of the
 119 particles. V_{particles} is the difference between the volume of the bed and the volume of the void.

120 V_{pores} is the difference between the volume of the particle and the volume of the skeletal.

121

122 **3.3 Instantaneous Sorption Equilibrium Model**

123 The column experiments were simulated by considering pollutant transport by advection and
 124 dispersion. The pollutant distribution between the mobile column porewater (in between the
 125 particles), and the solid matrix of the activated (AC) particles was described by a solid liquid
 126 partition coefficient, K_d. Parameters were expressed in SI units of moles, seconds, kilograms, and
 127 meters (Table S4).

128

129 **Table S4.** Independent and dependent column model variables and parameters and their
 130 dimensions for the instantaneous sorption equilibrium model.

t (s)	Time
x (m)	Distance from the column inlet

C_w (moles nm^{-3})	Pollutant concentration in mobile water in between the AC particles
K_d ($\text{m}^3 \text{kg}^{-1}$)	Reversible, linear AC solid-water partitioning coefficient for the pollutant
L_C (m)	Length of the column
R_C (m)	Radius of the column
C_{in} (moles m^{-3})	Pollutant concentration in the influent
v_x (m s^{-1})	Interstitial velocity of the mobile water in between the AC particles in the x direction
D_{disp} ($\text{m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$)	Dispersion coefficient for pollutants in the water in between the AC particles in the x direction
M_{AC} (kg)	Total dry AC mass of particles (of all sizes) in the column
$\Theta_{AC,w}$ (-)	Water-filled AC intraparticle porosity
d_{AC} (kg m^{-3})	Solid density of the AC skeleton

131

132 3.3.1 Calculated Column Properties

133 The volume fraction of the column filled with AC particles, θ_{AC} , is defined as

$$134 \quad \theta_{AC} = \frac{M_{AC}}{(1 - \theta_{AC,w})d_{AC}L_C\pi R_C^2} \text{ (eq 5)}$$

135 where M_{AC} is the total dry mass of AC particles in the column, $\theta_{AC,w}$ is the water-filled
 136 intraparticle AC porosity, d_{AC} is the skeletal solid density of the AC, L_C is the length of the
 137 column, and R_C is the radius of the column.

138

139 The volume fraction of the space in the column in between the AC particles, which is assumed to
140 be entirely filled with mobile water, θ_w , is defined as

141 $\theta_w = 1 - \theta_{AC}$ (eq 6)

142

143 3.3.2 Differential Equation

144 *Pollutant transport in mobile water moving in between the AC particles:*

145 The following partial differential equation is assumed to govern the pollutant concentration in
146 the mobile water phase moving in between the AC particles

147
$$(\theta_w + \theta_{AC} \cdot (\theta_{AC,w} + (1 - \theta_{AC,w})d_{AC}K_d)) \cdot \frac{d}{dt}C_w = \theta_w D_{disp} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2}C_w - \theta_w v_x \frac{\partial}{\partial x}C_w$$

148 (eq 7)

149 where θ_w is the fraction of the column volume in between the AC particles, which is assumed to
150 be fully water saturated, K_d is the linear AC solid-water partitioning coefficient of the pollutant,
151 D_{disp} is the dispersion coefficient of pollutants in mobile water, and v_x is the interstitial velocity
152 of this water, both in the x direction.

153 *Boundary conditions for the column:*

154 The pollutant concentration at the column inlet is equal to the concentration in the column
155 influent, C_{in} ,

156 $C_w|_{x=0} = C_{in}$ (eq 8)

157 And a zero concentration gradient boundary condition is enforced at the column outlet

158 $\frac{\partial}{\partial x}C_w|_{x=L} = 0$ (eq 9)

159

160 3.4 Intraparticle Diffusion Model

161 The column experiments were simulated by considering pollutant transport by advection and
162 dispersion in the mobile water moving in between the AC particles in addition to sorption-
163 retarded intraparticle diffusion into AC particles. The pollutant distribution between water and
164 the solid matrix of the AC particles was described by a linear sorption coefficient K_d . Parameters
165 were expressed in SI units of moles, seconds, kilograms, and meters (Table S5).

166

167 **Table S5.** Independent and dependent column model variables and parameters and their
168 dimensions for the intraparticle diffusion model.

t (s)	Time
x (m)	Distance from the column inlet
r (m)	Radial distance from the AC particle centre
C_w (moles m^{-3})	Pollutant concentration in mobile water in between the AC particles
C_{AC} (moles m^{-3})	Pollutant concentration in the AC intraparticle porewater
K_d ($m^3 kg^{-1}$)	Reversible, linear AC solid-water partitioning coefficient for the pollutant
L_C (m)	Length of the column
R_C (m)	Radius of the column
C_{in} (moles m^{-3})	Pollutant concentration in the influent
v_x ($m s^{-1}$)	Interstitial velocity of the mobile water in between the AC particles in the x direction
D_{disp} ($m^2 s^{-1}$)	Dispersion coefficient for pollutants in the mobile water in

	between the AC particles in the x direction
M_{AC} (kg)	Dry AC mass of particles
R_{AC} (m)	AC particle radius
$\Theta_{AC,w}$ (-)	Water-filled AC intraparticle porosity
d_{AC} (kg m ⁻³)	Solid density of the AC skeleton
τ (-)	AC pore network tortuosity factor
D_{aq} (m ² s ⁻¹)	The molecular diffusion coefficient of the pollutant in water

169

170

171 3.4.1 Calculated Column Properties

172 The volume fraction of the column filled with AC particles θ_{AC} , is defined as

$$173 \quad \theta_{AC} = \frac{M_{AC}}{(1 - \theta_{AC,w})d_{AC}L_C\pi R_C^2} \quad (\text{eq 10})$$

174 where M_{AC} is the dry mass of AC particles, $\theta_{AC,w}$ is the water-filled intraparticle AC porosity,
 175 d_{AC} is the skeletal solid density of the AC, L_C is the length of the column, and R_C is the radius of
 176 the column.

177 The volume fraction of the column in between the AC particles, which is assumed to be entirely
 178 filled with mobile water, θ_w , is defined as

$$179 \quad \theta_w = 1 - \theta_{AC} \quad (\text{eq 11})$$

180

181 3.4.2 Differential Equations

182 *Pollutant diffusion in intraparticle pore water:*

183 The following partial differential equation is assumed to govern the pollutant concentration in
 184 the AC intraparticle pore water, $C_{AC,ippw}$

$$185 \quad (\theta_{AC,w} + (1 - \theta_{AC,w})d_{AC}K_d) \frac{d}{dt} C_{AC,ippw} = D_{eff,AC} \frac{1}{r^2} \cdot \frac{\partial}{\partial r} r^2 \frac{\partial}{\partial r} C_{AC,ippw} \quad (\text{eq 12})$$

186 where r is the radial distance from the AC particle center, and t is the time.

187 The effective diffusion coefficient of the pollutant in the AC pore network is defined as

$$188 \quad D_{eff,AC} = \frac{\theta_{AC,w} D_{aq}}{\tau} \quad (\text{eq 13})$$

189 where τ is the AC pore network tortuosity factor, and D_{aq} is the molecular diffusion coefficient of
 190 the pollutant in water.

191 *Boundary conditions for the AC particles:*

192 A no net diffusion flux boundary condition is enforced at $r=0$ in the AC particle cores

$$193 \quad \left. \frac{\partial}{\partial r} C_{AC,ippw} \right|_{r=0} = 0 \quad (\text{eq 14})$$

194 The pollutant concentration in AC intraparticle pore water at the mobile water-AC interface is
 195 assumed to be equal to the pollutant concentration in the mobile water in between the soil and
 196 AC particles (i.e. no external aqueous film mass transfer resistance)

$$197 \quad C_{AC,ippw} \Big|_{r=R_{BC}} = C_w \quad (\text{eq 15})$$

198 where R_{BC} is the particle radius.

199 *Pollutant transport in mobile water in between the AC particles:*

200 The following partial differential equation is assumed to govern the pollutant concentration in
 201 the mobile water phase in between the AC particles:

$$202 \quad \theta_w \cdot \frac{d}{dt} C_w = \theta_w D_{disp} \frac{\partial^2}{\partial x^2} C_w - \theta_w v_x \frac{\partial}{\partial x} C_w + r_{ippwd,out} \quad (\text{eq 16})$$

203 where θ_w is the fraction of the column volume in between the AC particles, which is assumed to
 204 be fully water saturated, D_{disp} is the dispersion coefficient for pollutants in mobile water in the x
 205 direction, and v_x is the interstitial velocity also in the x direction.

206 The AC particles to mobile water mass transfer rate, $r_{ippwd,out}$, is described by

$$r_{ippwd,out} = -\frac{\theta_{AC}}{\frac{4}{3}\pi R_{AC}^3} \cdot 4\pi R_{AC}^2 \cdot D_{eff,AC} \cdot \left. \frac{\partial}{\partial r} C_{AC,ippw} \right|_{r=R_{AC}} = -3 \frac{\theta_{AC}}{R_{AC}} \cdot D_{eff,AC} \cdot \left. \frac{\partial}{\partial r} C_{AC,ippw} \right|_{r=R_{AC}}$$

207
 208 (eq 17)

209 *Boundary conditions for the column:*

210 The pollutant concentration at the column inlet is equal to the concentration in the column
 211 influent, C_{in} ,

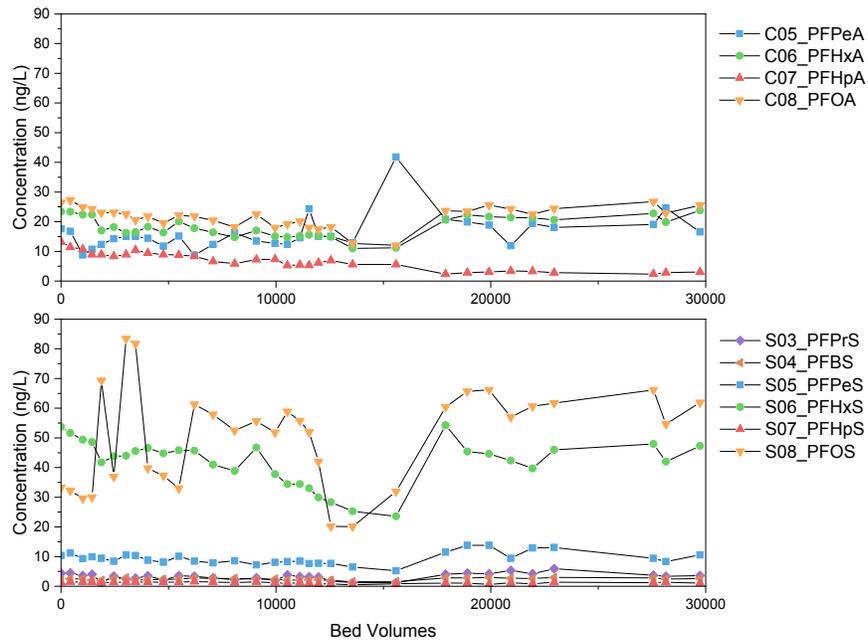
$$212 C_w|_{x=0} = C_{in} \text{ (eq 18)}$$

213 And a zero-concentration gradient boundary condition is enforced at the column outlet

$$214 \left. \frac{\partial}{\partial x} C_w \right|_{x=L} = 0 \text{ (eq 19)}$$

215

216 **3.5 Influent Concentration**



217

218

Figure S2. Influent concentration over time.

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220 **3.6 Modeling Output Results**

221

Table S6. Equilibrium model derived K_d and SSR values.

		PFPeA	PFHxA	PFHpA	PFOA	PFPeS	PFBS	PFPeS	PFHxS	PFHpS	PFOS
F400	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.40	4.56	4.88	4.80	4.46	4.62	4.74	4.82	4.87	4.86
	SSR	0.170	0.079	0.001	0.013	0.082	0.136	0.334	0.021	0.003	0.001
GAC400	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.45	4.56	4.92	4.80	4.47	4.63	4.74	4.85	4.89	4.89
	SSR	0.130	0.053	0.000	0.075	0.044	0.159	0.367	0.030	0.010	0.018
F600	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.34	4.47	4.80	4.61	4.42	4.55	4.64	4.68	4.70	4.66
	SSR	0.248	0.253	0.007	0.387	0.241	0.397	0.402	0.241	0.066	0.245
GCN1240	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.41	4.45	4.86	4.59	4.43	4.49	4.54	4.64	4.76	4.70
	SSR	0.282	0.191	0.038	0.156	0.202	0.052	0.177	0.170	0.355	0.267

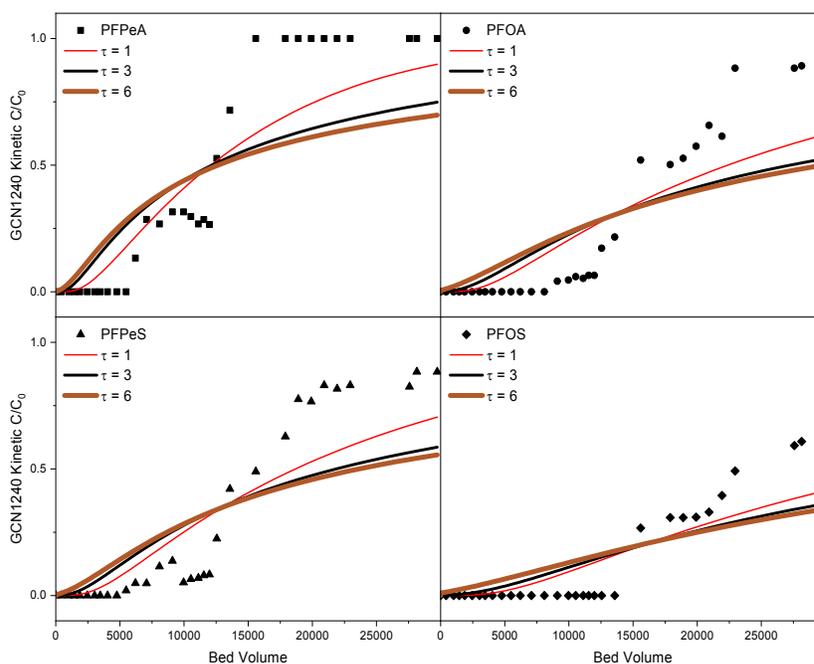
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Table S7. Intraparticle diffusion model derived K_d and SSR values at $\tau = 1$.

		PFPeA	PFHxA	PFHpA	PFOA	PFPrS	PFBS	PFPeS	PFHxS	PFHpS	PFOS
F400	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.49	4.71	5.58	5.32	4.54	4.82	5.02	5.35	5.61	5.60
	SSR	1.710	1.022	0.002	0.018	1.385	0.434	0.105	0.011	0.007	0.005
GAC400	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.52	4.69	5.58	5.18	4.54	4.79	4.99	5.32	5.54	5.49
	SSR	1.164	1.113	0.002	0.054	1.299	0.501	0.197	0.008	0.020	0.008
F600	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.44	4.62	5.43	4.89	4.54	4.77	4.90	5.01	5.17	5.07
	SSR	1.735	0.652	0.001	0.167	0.607	0.265	0.076	0.055	0.084	0.139
GCN1240	Log K_d (L/kg)	4.47	4.52	5.36	4.77	4.50	4.59	4.68	4.85	5.09	5.02
	SSR	0.773	1.132	0.008	0.651	0.939	1.166	0.689	0.393	0.110	0.266

224



225

226 **Figure S3.** Effect of the tortuosity on the best fit K_d for the intraparticle diffusion model using

227 GCN1240 breakthrough results for four different compounds, PFPeA, PFOA, PFPeS, and PFOS.

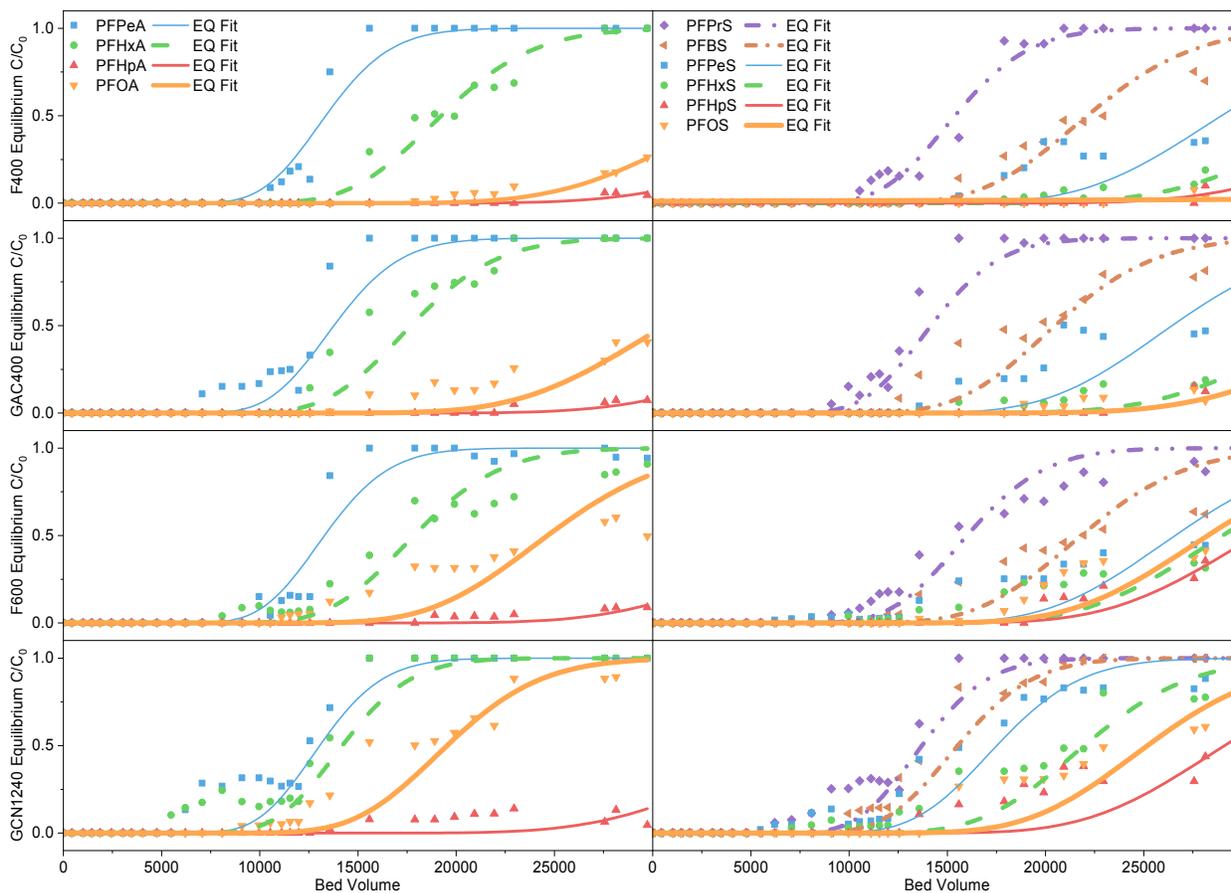
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229

230 **Table S8.** SSR at different tortuosity values for selected compounds in GCN1240 pilot data.

	$\tau = 1$	$\tau = 3$	$\tau = 6$
PFPeA	0.773	1.549	1.851
PFOA	0.651	0.976	1.113
PFPeS	0.689	1.104	1.259
PFOS	0.266	0.370	0.460

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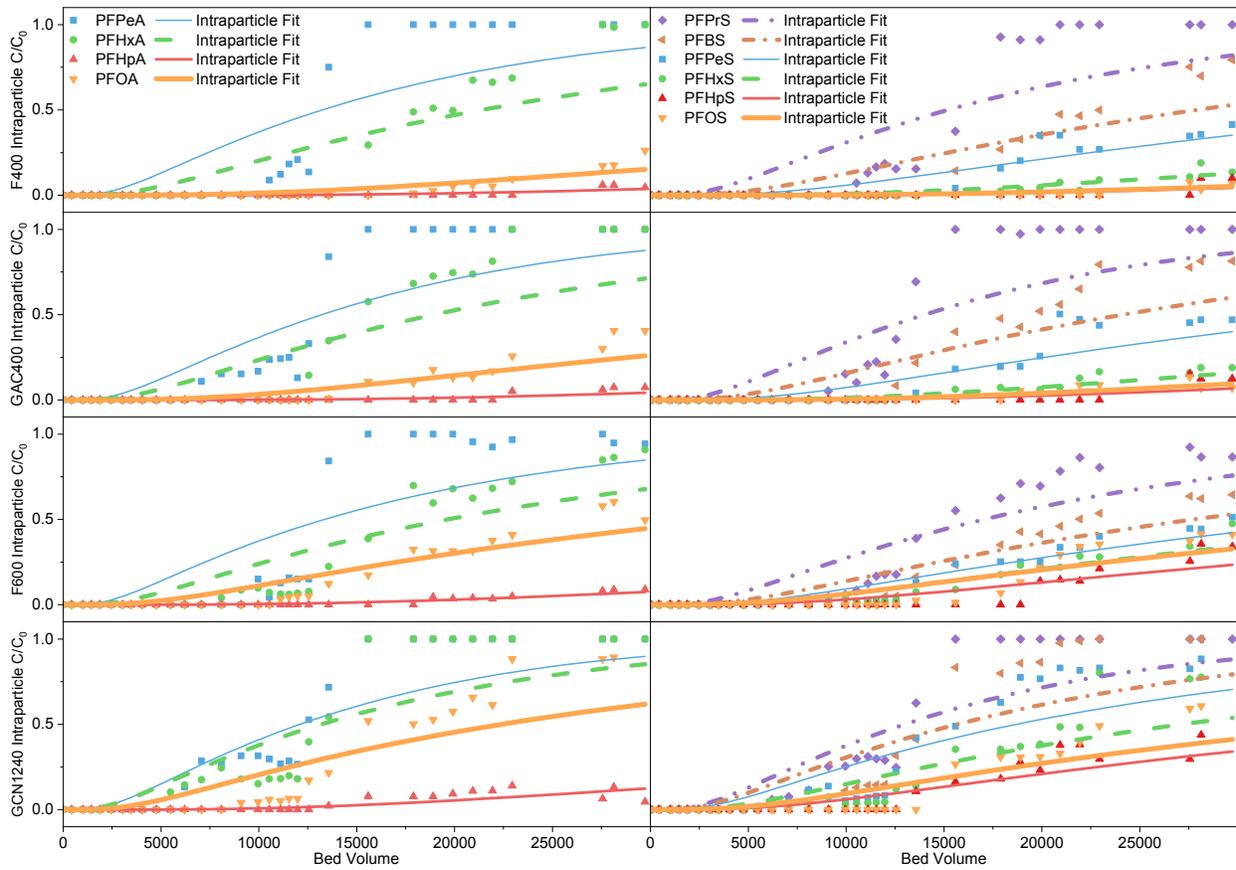


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Figure S4. Equilibrium model fits to data.

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237

238

Figure S5. Intraparticle diffusion model fits to data.

239

240 3.7 Linear Regressions from Model Outputs

241 Table S7 and S8 show linear regression fits from the model output K_d fits. The x variable is

242 PFAS chain length and the y variable is $\log K_d$ (L/kg). The intraparticle diffusion model outputs

243 are performed with a tortuosity = 1.

244

245

246

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Table S9. Equilibrium model linear regression fits.

Equilibrium Model			
		Carboxylates	Sulfonates
F400	Regression	$y = 0.153x + 3.66$	$y = 0.081x + 4.28$
	R2	0.8	0.89
GAC400	Regression	$y = 0.139x + 3.78$	$y = 0.085x + 4.27$
	R2	0.72	0.89
F600	Regression	$y = 0.114x + 3.81$	$y = 0.049x + 4.34$
	R2	0.55	0.74
GCN1240	Regression	$y = 0.094x + 3.97$	$y = 0.064x + 4.24$
	R2	0.35	0.89

Table S10. Intraparticle diffusion model linear regression fits at $\tau = 1$.

Intraparticle Diffusion Model			
		Carboxylates	Sulfonates
F400	Regression	$y = 0.337x + 2.83$	$y = 0.228x + 3.90$
	R2	0.72	0.96
GAC400	Regression	$y = 0.286x + 3.13$	$y = 0.210x + 3.96$
	R2	0.59	0.94
F600	Regression	$y = 0.216x + 3.44$	$y = 0.113x + 4.289$
	R2	0.42	0.86
GCN1240	Regression	$y = 0.176x + 3.64$	$y = 0.122x + 4.115$
	R2	0.31	0.93

Table S11. K_d value comparison between Xiao et al. 2017³ and EQ model predictions.

	PFPeA	PFHxA	PFHpA	PFOA	PFPrS	PFBS	PFPeS	PFHxS	PFHpS	PFOS
Xiao et al. Batch K_d	4.29	4.18	4.49	5.25	3.83	4.69	4.64	5.28	5.79	5.95
F400 EQ	4.40	4.56	4.88	4.80	4.46	4.62	4.74	4.82	4.87	4.86
GAC400 EQ	4.45	4.56	4.92	4.80	4.47	4.63	4.74	4.85	4.89	4.89
F600 EQ	4.34	4.47	4.80	4.61	4.42	4.55	4.64	4.68	4.70	4.66
GCN1240 EQ	4.41	4.45	4.86	4.59	4.43	4.49	4.54	4.64	4.76	4.70
F400 Intraparticle Diffusion	4.49	4.71	5.58	5.32	4.54	4.82	5.02	5.35	5.61	5.60
GAC400 Intraparticle Diffusion	4.52	4.69	5.58	5.18	4.54	4.79	4.99	5.32	5.54	5.49
F600 Intraparticle Diffusion	4.44	4.62	5.43	4.89	4.54	4.77	4.90	5.01	5.17	5.07
GCN1240 Intraparticle Diffusion	4.47	4.52	5.36	4.77	4.50	4.59	4.68	4.85	5.09	5.02

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