Supplementary Information (SI) for Environmental Science: Water Research & Technology. This journal is © The Royal Society of Chemistry 2025

Supporting Information for: Biotransformation and Partitioning of Structurally Different PFAS by Wastewater Microbial Consortia

1. Supporting Text

Section S1: Anaerobic Basal Media Recipe

Anaerobic basal media was prepared as needed using the following recipe to produce 1 liter. 954.09 mL of DI water were added to a 1 L glass bottle. 40 mL salt solution, 2 mL trace element solution, 2 mL Se/Wo solution, 0.25 mL Resazurin solution, and 1.66 mL sodium lactate were added. This mixture was brought to a boil, then reduced to room temperature under N₂. 48.036 mg of Na₂S (2 mmol) and 24.2308 mg of L-cysteine (2 mmol) were also added, and the bottle was thoroughly mixed. The bottle was then autoclaved at 121°C, then allowed to cool to room temperature once again. The bottle was tightly sealed and used for experiment as soon as possible. Media was dispensed anaerobically under 100% nitrogen. Recipes for individual solutions follow below.

The salt solution was prepared in 1000 mL of DI water using 50 g NaCl, 20.5 g MgCl₂•6H₂O, 13.5 g NH₄Cl, 26 g KCl, 0.75 g CaCl₂•2H₂O, and 10 g KH₂PO₄. This solution was stored at room temperature.

The trace element solution was prepared in 1000 mL of DI water using 10 mL HCl (25% w/w), 1.5 g FeCl₂•4H₂O, 6.0 mg H₃BO₃, 190 mg CoCl₂•6H₂O, 100 mg MnCl₂•4H₂O, 70 mg ZnCl₂, 36 mg Na₂MoO₄•2H₂O, 24 mg NiCl₂•6H₂O, and 2 mg CuCl₂•2H₂O. The solution was stored in dark conditions at room temperature.

The Se/Wo solution was prepared in 1000 mL of DI water using 0.5 g NaOH, 6.0 mg Na₂SeO₃•5H₂O, and 8 mg Na₂WO₄•2H₂O. This solution was stored in dark conditions at room temperature. The Resazurin solution was prepared in 100 mL and 0.1 g of Resazurin. Ti(III)NTA was prepped to 25mM and also filter sterilized.

Section S2: Analytical Measurement of TCE by GC-ECD

All TCE samples were analyzed using a gas chromatograph coupled with an electron capture detector (GC-ECD, Agilent 7890B-⁶³ Ni ECD) with an HP-5 (30 m x 320 μm x 0.25 μm) column using a modified version of previous work.¹ ECD temperature was 290°C with helium carrier gas and a mixture of methane and argon as makeup gas with a flow rate of 18.8 mL/min. The oven program was set to start at 30 °C, hold for 10 minutes, then ramp up at 50 °C per minute until reaching 200 °C. Once at the final temperature, the oven would stay here for 4 minutes, for a total run time of 17.4 minutes. The column pressure was 5.7 psi with a flow of 1.2 mL/min. High concentrated TCE from culture flasks was diluted in methanol in first step. A second dilution step was performed in an analytical vial in tert butyl methyl ether (MTBE) to get samples in the linear range of the detector. Tetra chloro ethylene (PCE) was used as an internal standard. Calibrations

were completed at the beginning of run days, consisting of 5 concentrations, in duplicate. Concentrations were chosen to represent the range of concentrations in sample vials after dilutions. A calibration stock was created using the methanol stock solution and diluting into MTBE.

Section S3: Town of Amherst Wastewater Treatment Facility

Town of Amherst wastewater treatment facility, NY, USA treats an average of 24 million gallons of wastewater per day. The facility provides a two-stage aerobic treatment process where in the first stage secondary treatment it removes organic matter (reduces 75% of the influent BOD) and in the second stage tertiary treatment it works on nitrification (reduces the BOD to 6 mg/L). Each of the stage has separate sludge settlers. The first stage has a HRT of 1h and SRT of 8±4 d and mostly generates heterotrophic activated sludge (RAS 1), where the second stage has a HRT of 2h and SRT of 35±14 d and mostly generates nitrifying sludge (RAS 2). The TSS for the return activated sludge for stage 1 and 2 are 13090 mg/L and 5805 mg/L respectively.

	TSS	Volume added (mL)
	(mg/L)	
RAS 1 (AS)	13090	7.2
RAS 2 (NS)	5805	16.3
Mixed (MS)	9447	10

Section S4: Biosolid Extraction Procedure (adapted from Dickman & Aga, 2022)

Stored biosolid samples were weighed into PP tubes (50 mL) and then fortified with 25 µL of the 1 mg/L MPFAC, 19 ES standard mix. A series of ultrasonication solvent extractions were used, starting with solvent A aqueous acetic acid (1% v/v) (7.5 mL) and then solvent B 90:10 (v/v) methanol: aqueous acetic acid (1% v/v) (1.7 mL), repeating for a total of 6 cycles of sonication. In each cycle, samples were vortexed (30 s), sonicated (15 min, 60 °C), and centrifuged (10 min, 3700 × g, 24 °C). Each extraction solvent was collected and pooled in a PP tube (50 mL) after each cycle. After six cycles, the pooled extracts were centrifuged (1 h, 3700 × g, 24 °C) prior to SPE. Prior to loading, SPE cartridges were conditioned with methanol (4 mL), followed by NanopureTM water (4 mL). Pooled extraction solvent was loaded (1 mL/min) onto WatersTM C18 Sept Pac (6 cc, 500 mg) SPE cartridges on a vacuum manifold using high-volume PP lines. After loading the samples, PP bottles, lines, and SPE cartridges were washed with 20 mM ammonium acetate (pH 3.8, 6 mL) to collect any remaining analytes. Cartridges were then dried under vacuum (1 h). Samples were eluted with two, 3 mL volumes of methanol into clean 15-mL PP tubes. Graphitized carbon black (GCB) (100 mg) was added into the elution solvent to further improve matrix removal, and then samples were vortexed and centrifuged as described above. Clean extracts were collected into a clean 15-mL PP tube; the tube with the GCB was quantitatively transferred with an additional aliquot of methanol (1 mL) and pooled with the clean extract. Extracts were evaporated to dryness under N₂ then resuspended in 250 µL of 95:5 (v/v) solution of 5 mM ammonium acetate (pH 3.8):acetonitrile. Each extract was fortified with 25 µL of internal standard solution (1 µg/ mL), MPFOA. Finally, samples were transferred to PP centrifuge tubes (1.7 mL), centrifuged (20,800 g, 15 min), transferred to inserts (PP, 300 µL), and analyzed with LC-HRMS.

Section S5: Formulas

Total Aqueous Phase removal (%) = Adsorption and Microbial removal= $100 \times (C_0 - C_t, live) / C_0$;

Adsorption (%) = $100 \times (C_0 - C_t$, abiotic control) / C_0 ;

Microbial removal (%) = Total Aqueous Phase removal – Adsorption.

2. Supporting Table

Table S1: Details of 5 PFAS. PFAS analytes, abbreviations, and the associated isotopically labelled surrogate used for normalization and quantification. All mass labelled standards used in this study were purchased from *Wellington Laboratories*.

Analyte (Abbreviation)	Molecular formula	Cas No	Purity	Molecular weight	LOD (ppb)	LOQ (ppb)	Boiling point °C	Isotopically labelled (Mass labelled) surrogate	Structure
potassium perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS)	CF ₃ (CF ₂) ₇ SO3K	2795-39-3	>= 98%	538.22	0.62	2.06	249	¹³ C ₈ -PFOS	F F F F F F F OOH
Perflouro octanoic Acid (PFOA)	CF ₃ (CF ₂) ₆ COOH	335-67-1		414.07	0.44	1.47	192	¹³ C ₈ -PFOA	F F F F F F F
Perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS)	CF ₃ (CF ₂)3SO3H	375-73-5	97%	300.10	1.99	6.64	210-212	¹³ C ₃ -PFBS	F F F O OH
1H, 1H, 2H, 2H- perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (6:2 FTS)	$\mathrm{C_8H_5F_{13}O_3S}$	27619-97-2	97%	428.17	0.71	2.37		¹³ C ₂ -6:2 FTS	F F F F F O
2,2,3,3- Tetrafluoro-2- (1,1,2,2,3,3,3- heptafluoroprop oxy) propanoic acid HFPO dimer, acid fluoride (GenX)	C ₆ F ₁₂ O ₂	2062-98-8		332.04	1.52	5.05	54-56	¹³ C ₃ -HFPO- DA	F F F F F F

Table S2. List of 27 PFAS with their abbreviations and chemical structure screened for transformation products. LOD and LOQ provided for quantified PFAS.

Name	Abbreviation	Structure	LOD (ppb)	LOQ (ppb)
		Carboxylates		
Perfluorobutanoic acid	PFBA	F F O F F F	1.52	5.05
Perfluoropentanoic acid	PFPeA	F F F O	0.51	1.70
Perfluorohexanoic acid	PFHxA	F F F O OH	0.27	0.91
Perfluoroheptanoic acid	PFHpA	F F F F F O	0.4	1.33
Perfluorooctanoic acid	PFOA	F F F F F F F		
Perfluorononanoic acid	PFNA	F F F F F F F F		
Perfluorodecanoic acid	PFDA	F F F F F F F F F		
Perfluoroundecanoic acid	PFUnA	F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F		
Perfluorododecanoic acid	PFDoA	F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F		
Perfluorotridecanoic acid	PFTrDA	F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F		
Perfluorotetradecanoic acid	PFTeDA	F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F		
		Sulfonates		
Perfluorobutanesulfonic acid	PFBS	F F F O OH	1.99	6.64
P erfluoro-1-pentanesulfonate	L-PFPeS	F F F F F O	2.18	7.26

Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid	PFHxS	F F F F F S	1.21	4.02
		F F F F F O OH		
Perfluoro-1-heptanesulfonic acid	PFHpS	F F F F F F O OH	2.81	9.37
Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid	PFOS	F F F F F F F O		
Perfluoro-1-decanesulfonic acid	PFDS	F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F		
		Sulfanamides		
Perfluoro-1-octanesulfonamide	FOSA	F F F F F F F NH ₂		
N-methyl perfluorooctanesulfonamidoacetic acid	NMeFOSAA	F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F		
N-ethyl perfluorooctanesulfonamidoacetic acid	NEtFOSAA	F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F F		
		Fluorotelomer sulfonates		
1H, 1H, 2H, 2H-Perfluorohexane sulfonic acid	4:2FTS	F F F OOH		
1H, 1H, 2H, 2H-perfluorooctane sulfonic acid	6:2FTS	F F F F F O		
1H, 1H, 2H, 2H-Perfluorodecane sulfonic acid	8:2FTS	F F F F F F F F OOH		
	I	Ethers		
Perfluoro-3-methoxypropanoic acid	PFMPA	F F O OH		
Perfluoro-4-methoxybutanoic acid	PFMBA	F F F F		
Nonafluoro-3,6-dioxaheptanoic acid	NFDHA	F F F F O		
Perfluoro(2-ethoxyethane)sulfonic acid	PFEESA	F F F F O		

Table S3. Anaerobic Culture Design and Operational Conditions

Sample Type	Electron Donor	Inoculum	Electron Acceptor	Number of Replicates			
			PFOA				
			PFOS				
		KB-1® enrichment culture	6:2 FTS				
			PFBS				
Even anima antal	Lactate		GenX	2			
Experimental	Lactate		PFOA				
			PFOS				
		WWTP sludge	6:2 FTS				
			PFBS				
			GenX				
			PFOA				
			PFOS				
		Autoclaved KB-1® enrichment culture	6:2 FTS				
			PFBS				
Abiotic	Lactate		GenX	2			
Control	Lactate		PFOA				
			PFOS				
		Autoclaved WWTP sludge	6:2 FTS				
			PFBS				
			GenX				
Biotic	Lactate	KB-1® enrichment culture	TCE	2			
Control	Laciale	Autoclaved KB-1® enrichment culture	TCE	2			

Table S4. Aerobic Culture Design and Operational Conditions

Sample Type	Inoculum	PFAS	Number of Replicates
		PFOA	
		PFOS	
	Mixed sludge	6:2 FTS	
		PFBS	
		GenX	
		PFOA	
		PFOS	
Experimental	Activated Sludge	6:2 FTS	3
_		PFBS	
		GenX	
		PFOA	
		PFOS	
	Nitrification Sludge	6:2 FTS	
		PFBS	
		GenX	
		PFOA	
		PFOS	
Abiotic Control	Mixed sludge	6:2 FTS	3
		PFBS	
		GenX	

Table S5. Significant difference between biological replicates with different PFAS exposure (PFOA, PFOS, and 6:2 FTS) using different sludge type using AMOVA

Sludge Type	Day	PFAS 1	PFAS 2	p value
		PFOS	PFOA	0.342
	0	PFOS	62FTS	0.340
		PFOA	62FTS	0.332
		PFOS	PFOA	0.351
	6	PFOS	62FTS	0.347
Mixed		PFOA	62FTS	0.340
Mixed		PFOS	PFOA	0.335
	12	PFOS	62FTS	0.336
		PFOA	62FTS	0.363
		PFOS	PFOA	0.336
	21	PFOS	62FTS	0.329
		PFOA	62FTS 0.329 62FTS 0.647 PFOA 0.342 62FTS 0.665 62FTS 0.660 PFOA 0.669	0.647
		PFOS	PFOA	0.342
	0	PFOS	62FTS	0.665
		PFOA	62FTS	0.660
	6	PFOS	PFOA	0.669
		PFOS	62FTS	0.347
Activated		PFOA	62FTS	0.340
Activated	12	PFOS	PFOA	0.335
		PFOS	62FTS	0.678
		PFOA	62FTS	0.363
	21	PFOS	PFOA	0.336
		PFOS	62FTS	0.684
		PFOA	62FTS	0.303
		PFOS	PFOA	0.684
	0	PFOS	62FTS	0.665
		PFOA	62FTS	0.660
		PFOS	PFOA	0.351
	6	PFOS	62FTS	0.347
NT:		PFOA	62FTS	0.340
Nitrification		PFOS	PFOA	0.335
	12	PFOS	62FTS	0.678
		PFOA	62FTS	0.692
		PFOS	PFOA	0.336
	21	PFOS	62FTS	1.000
		PFOA	62FTS	0.647

Table S6: PFAS identified in biosolid (before spiking with PFAS)

PFAS type	PFAS	MS (aqueous)	NS (solid)	AS (solid)
		mg.L ⁻¹	ng∙mg ⁻¹	ng∙mg ⁻¹
	PFHpA	0	0	0
	PFHxA	0	0	0
Target short chain	PFPeA	0	0	0
compound	PFHpS	0	0.040	0.050
	PFHxS	0	0	0
	PFPeS	0	0.150	0.010
	PFBS	0	0.080	0.080
	PFOA	0	0	0
Parent Compound	PFOS	0	3.12	4.4
	6:2 FTS	0	0.66	0.44

Table S7: Extraction Recovery (%) by spiking biosolid samples with 1 mg/L MPFAC, 19 ES standard mix

Mass labelled Compound	Extraction Recovery (%)
PFBA	14
PFPeA	80
PFHxA	95
PFHpA	87
PFOA	80
PFBS	90
PFHxS	84
PFOS	65
4:2FTS	102
6:2FTS	85
8:2FTS	69

Table S8: Fluoride Mass Balance for PFOA at live nitrification sludge and killed control sludge at day 21

		Live Sludge	Control Sludge		
	Fluoride (mg)	% wrt initial concentration	Fluoride (mg)	% wrt initial concentration	
PFOA(aq)	0.584	16.987	2.538	92.306	
PFOA(s)	1.209	35.149	0.232	8.425	
Short product(aq)	0.004	0.110	0.005	0.189	
Short product(s)	0.018	0.535	0.000	0.000	
Fluoride (aq)	0.018	0.519	0.014	0.515	
Sum	1.834	53.300	2.789	101.435	
Missing	1.606	46.700	0.651	-1.435	

Table S9: Fluoride Mass Balance for PFOS at live nitrification sludge and killed control sludge at day 21:

		Live sludge	Control sludge		
	Fluoride (mg)	% wrt initial concentration	Fluoride (mg)	% wrt initial concentration	
PFOS(aq)	0.355	13.752	1.285	49.756	
PFOS(s)	1.480	57.292	1.238	47.940	
Short product(aq)	0.004	0.162	0.035	1.355	
Short product(s)	0.181	7.021	0.102	3.966	
Fluoride (aq)	0.021	0.794	0.013	0.492	
Sum	2.041	79.020	2.674	103.508	
Missing	1.189	20.980	0.556	-3.508	

Table S10: Rate constant k (d⁻¹) and halftime $t_{1/2}$ (d) using $ln(C/C_0)$ vs. time (t > 6 d; C corrected by the abiotic control) with a pseudo–first-order kinetics analysis after acclimation (~6 d) for PFOA, PFOS, and 6:2 FTS across MS/AS/NS

	PFOA				PFOS			6:2 FTS		
	MS	AS	NS	MS	AS	NS	MS	AS	NS	
rate	0.1185	0.0876	0.0998	0.0305	0.2663	0.2744	0.0795	0.1071	0.1089	
constant,	0.1330	0.1155	0.1076	0.0890	0.2483	0.3002	0.0817	0.1154	0.1094	
k (per										
day)	0.1346	0.0859	0.1058	0.1215	0.2278	0.2758		0.1060	0.0939	
halftime	5.8490	7.9110	6.9478	22.7158	2.6033	2.5257	8.7165	6.4741	6.3650	
(t1/2),	5.2124	5.9993	6.4393	7.7868	2.7916	2.3091	8.4859	6.0070	6.3365	

	5.1506	8.0705	6.5498	5.7029	3.0428	2.5128	#DIV/0!	6.5363	7.3808
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Table S11: Summary of determining rate constant k (d^{-1}) using $ln(C/C_0)$ vs. time (t > 6 d; C corrected by the abiotic control) with a pseudo-first-order kinetics analysis after acclimation (\sim 6 d) for PFOA, PFOS and 6:2 FTS across MS/AS/NS

	Summary stats						
	Treatmen	n	Mean_k	SD	SE	95%CI_lower	95%CI_upper
	t						
	MS	3	0.1287	0.0089	0.0051	0.1067	0.1507
	AS	3	0.0963	0.0166	0.0096	0.0550	0.1377
PFOA	NS	3	0.1044	0.0041	0.0024	0.0942	0.1147
	MS	3	0.0804	0.0461	0.0266	-0.0342	0.1949
	AS	3	0.2474	0.0192	0.0111	0.1997	0.2952
PFOS	NS	3	0.2835	0.0145	0.0084	0.2475	0.3194
	MS	2	0.0806	0.0015	0.0011	0.0669	0.0943
	AS	3	0.1095	0.0051	0.0030	0.0968	0.1222
6:2 FTS	NS	3	0.1041	0.0088	0.0051	0.0822	0.1259

Table S12: Determination of the statistical significance of rate constants across sludge types for PFOA, PFOS, and 6:2 FTS analysis of variance (ANOVA) at 95% confidence level (α = 0.05)

	ANOVA, α=0.05				
	Statistic	p-value			
PFOA	6.8497	0.0283			
PFOS	39.0498	0.0004			
6:2 FTS	12.7866	0.0108			

Table S13: Post hoc analysis using Tukey's HSD test (α = 0.05) to evaluate pairwise differences among the rate constants of AS-MS, MS-NS and NS-AS for PFOA, PFOS and 6:2 FTS

Tukey HSD Test, α=0.05							
	group 1	group 2	meandiff	p-adj	lower	upper	reject
	AS	MS	0.0323	0.0278	0.0044	0.0602	TRUE
							FALS
	AS	NS	0.0081	0.6676	-0.0198	0.0360	Е
							FALS
PFOA	MS	NS	-0.0243	0.0824	-0.0522	0.0036	Е
	AS	MS	-0.1671	0.0012	-0.2424	-0.0918	TRUE
							FALS
	AS	NS	0.0360	0.3683	-0.0392	0.1113	Е
PFOS	MS	NS	0.2031	0.0004	0.1279	0.2784	TRUE
	AS	MS	-0.0289	0.0104	-0.0481	-0.0097	TRUE
							FALS
	AS	NS	-0.0054	0.5933	-0.0226	0.0118	Е
6:2 FTS	MS	NS	0.0235	0.0241	0.0042	0.0427	TRUE

3. Supporting Figures

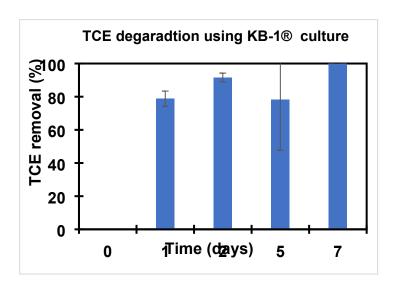


Figure S1. TCE degradation over 7 days using commercially available KB-1® enrichment culture. Removal is calculated with respect to control. This study was done as a proof of biotic activity of KB-1® enrichment culture.

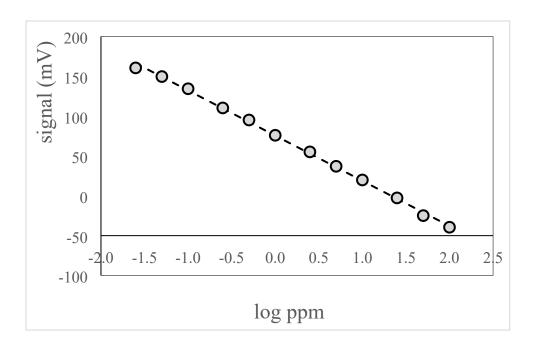


Figure S2. Calibration curve of fluoride (F-) using ion-selective electrode (ISE) for limit of detection (LOD) calculations.

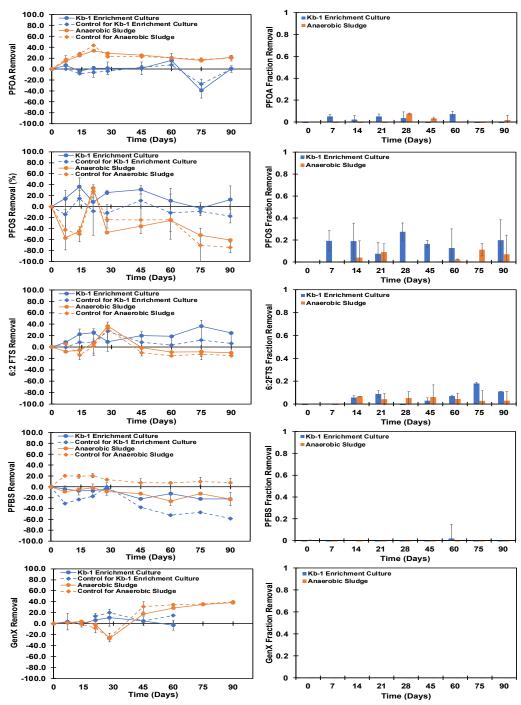


Figure S3. Anaerobic Degradation of PFOA, PFOS, 6:2 FTS, PFBS and GenX with KB-1® enrichment culture (blue) and anaerobic sludge (orange) over 90 days where the circle indicates biotic samples and diamond indicates heat inactivated controls.

Left graphs show removal of parent compound in comparison with initial dosage of PFAS where $Concentration \ at \ time \ t = t$

removal was calculated as % Removal= (1- concentration at time t = 0) × 100. Right graphs represent fraction removal of PFAS with respect to heat inactivated control to account for any

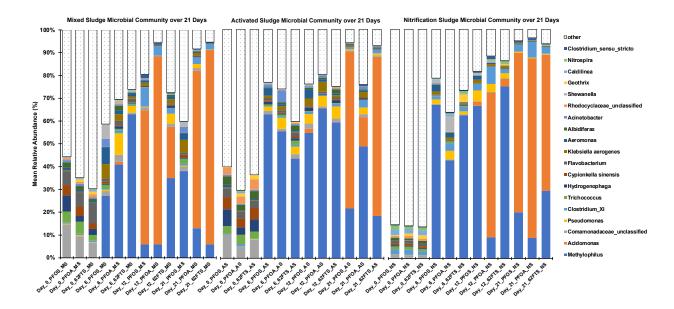
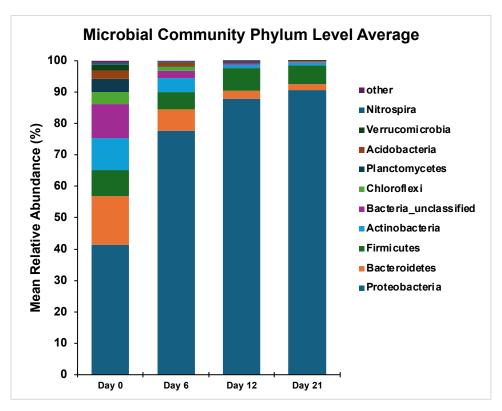


Figure S4. Mean relative abundance for the top 1% OTUs for mixed and activated sludge and 0.5% OTUs for nitrification sludge totaling 19 OTUs are presented over 21 days of incubation. Each bar represents the average microbial community observed under two replicates of each of PFOA, PFOS and 6:2FTS with each of mixed, activated and nitrification sludge incubation at each time point. Across different sludge types, the inoculum had a higher diversity that converged to a selective handful microbial community after 21 days study period.



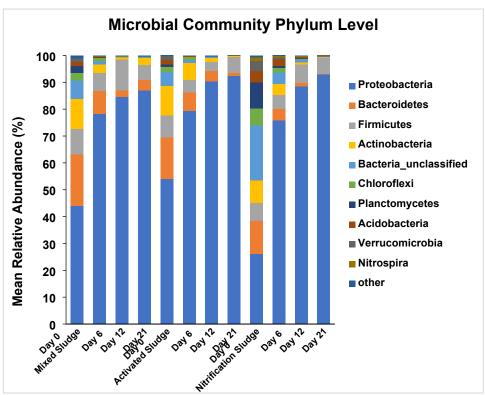


Figure S5. Mean Relative abundance of Phylum level taxa (top) averaged across all sludge type and all PFAS type at each time point over 21 days and (bottom) averaged across all PFAS type at each time point over 21 days in each sludge type.

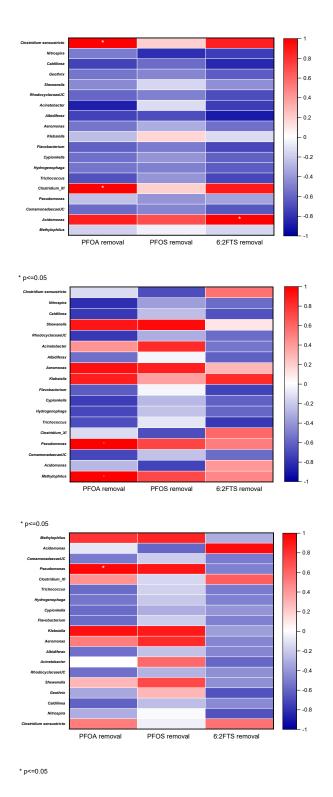


Figure S6. Pearson correlation plot between microbial community (top OTU) under (top) mixed sludge, (middle) activated sludge, and (bottom) nitrification sludge with PFAS removal over 21 days.

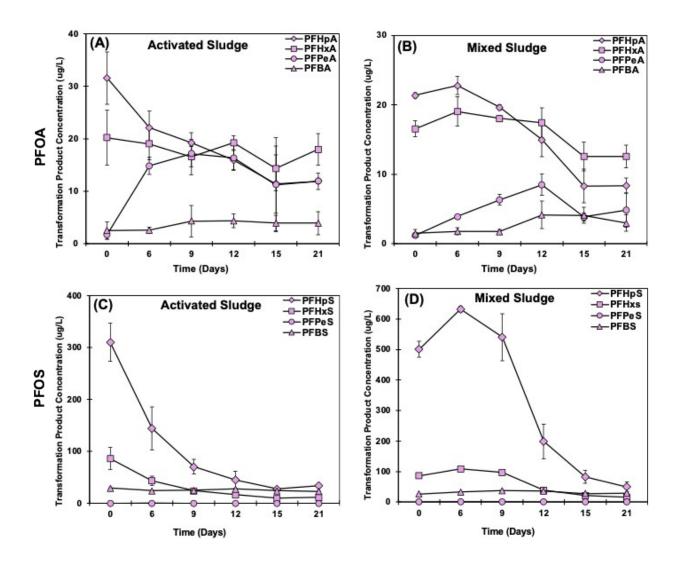


Figure S7. Transformation of PFOA under A) activated sludge, B)mixed sludge and PFOS under C) activated sludge, D)mixed sludge into shorter chain (C7-C4) PFAS in aqueous phase over 21days of aerobic incubation. Significant generation of PFPeA and PFBA is observed from PFOA degradation over 21 days.

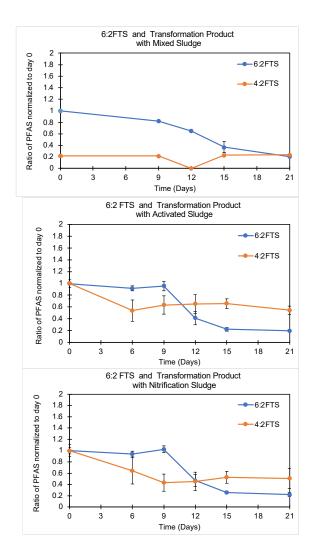


Figure S8. Ratio of 6:2 FTS and transformed product normalized to day 0 under incubation with mixed sludge, activate sludge and nitrification sludge. Only 4:2 FTS was observed but that too was always present below than its initial concentration.

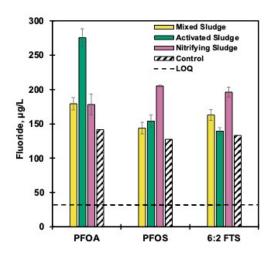


Figure S9. Detection of Fluoride in aqueous phase at day 21 (endpoint) in mixed sludge, activated sludge, nitrification sludge and autoclaved control for PFOA, PFOS and 6:2FTS, respectively. Fluoride ion concentrations were measured using a fluoride ion selective electrode (ISE). Limit of detection (LOD) and limit of quantitation (LOQ) of the ISE was 28.4 and 31.8 μ g·L⁻¹, respectively.

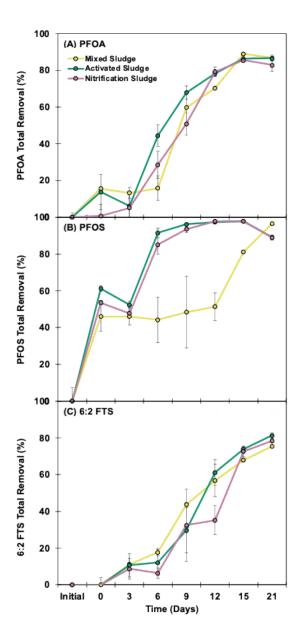


Figure S10: PFOA,PFOS and 6:2 FTS total removal from aqueous phase with respect to initial concentration over 21-day incubation period across all sludge conditions. The total removal is a combination of adsorption, biotic accumulation, and transformation.

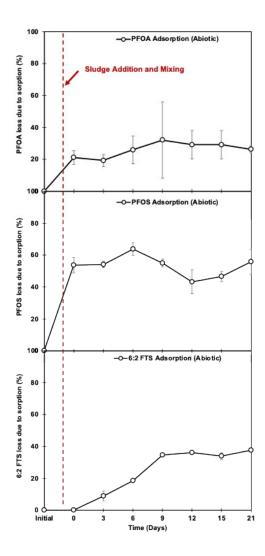


Figure S11: PFOA, PFOS, and 6:2 FTS loss (in %) from initial concentration over 21-day incubation period in abiotic control due to adsorption. For PFOA and PFOS, maximum removal (=loss) occurred right after mixing with sludge, and for 6:2 FTS, the removal reached equilibrium slowly over 9 days.

Reference:

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- Dickman, R. A., & Aga, D. S. (2022). Efficient workflow for suspect screening analysis to characterize novel and legacy per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in biosolids. *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry*, 414(15), 4497–4507. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00216-022-04088-2