

Doretta Colburn
Maine Council of Churches

Senator Bennett and Representative Gramlich, and members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources: My name is Doretta Colburn. I am an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ, a farmer and live in Waterford.

I am writing this on behalf of the Maine Council of Churches, the leading organization of Protestant Christian churches in our state. We represent seven denominations statewide which include 437 churches with a total membership of more than 55,000 members. Our mission statement provides that, "we promote the full humanity and dignity of every person, the sacredness of all Creation, and the opportunity for everyone to achieve their full potential." It is to this statement that I write.

All of us should be able to trust that our environment is safe from unnecessary harm to our wellbeing and to the sustainability of our planet. Yet, when manufacturers use chemicals in their products that are hazardous to the environment and risk the health of those exposed to them, that basic right is violated. It is an even greater concern when we are shown that low-income communities, communities of color, tribal communities and rural regions of our state are disproportionately affected. Our advocacy, our voices of fairness must speak up for those whose voices are less heard and/or less able to speak for themselves, including our children, grandchildren, and generations to follow.

Research has shown that these PFAS chemicals present significant health risks and bring great harm to the environment as they contaminate our soil and water thus impacting the use of these resources that we all count on for living. The fact that many of these chemicals do not breakdown, but rather remain in the environment is of critical concern to everyone and the economic strength of our state.

As a pastor, I am compelled to speak and act whenever lives stand to be harmed and whenever the balance of Earth is in jeopardy. As a farmer along with my husband, raising livestock and produce to feed our family and our community, I am equally committed to raise awareness of injustices wherever and whenever they occur. In respect to our livelihood and our faith, we see ourselves as keepers of our land while we live on it always working to maintain the health of our soil and water and in so doing, protect the health and wellbeing of all whom we provide for. We know the impact such contamination would have on what we do and what we believe.

I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1503 in order to promote a healthier environment for all.

Thank you for considering my testimony.
Doretta Colburn 630 Valley Road, Waterford