



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

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No. 1006

H.P. 642

House of Representatives, March 7, 2023

**An Act to Ensure Access to Safe Drinking Water from Household
Wells in Rural Areas by Expanding Testing**

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.


ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative PLUECKER of Warren.
Cosponsored by Senator INGWERSEN of York and
Representatives: CLUCHEY of Bowdoinham, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, MEYER of
Eliot, MILLIKEN of Blue Hill, QUINT of Hodgdon, RANA of Bangor, Senators: CURRY of
Waldo, MOORE of Washington.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §2602-A, sub-§3**, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 483, Pt. BB, §2, is
3 repealed and the following enacted in its place:

4 **3. Well water testing for low-income residents.** The department shall establish and
5 maintain programs to provide free testing for contaminants of the private residential water
6 supplies of low-income residents. As used in this subsection, "low-income resident" means
7 a person who receives assistance under the MaineCare program or the food supplement
8 program under section 3104.

9 A. The programs must include:

10 (1) A program through the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory
11 established in section 565 to provide testing for arsenic and other contaminants
12 specified in section 2660-T; and

13 (2) A program to provide testing for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl
14 substances, as defined in Title 38, section 1614, subsection 1, paragraph F, through
15 contracts with qualified laboratories. The testing must be based on the most
16 recently available analytical method approved by the federal Environmental
17 Protection Agency that quantifies the maximum levels of perfluoroalkyl and
18 polyfluoroalkyl substances.

19 B. The department may not charge any fee or recover any cost as otherwise permitted
20 by this chapter for a test of a private residential water supply performed for a low-
21 income resident under the programs established pursuant to this subsection.

22 C. The department shall conduct educational outreach to increase awareness among
23 low-income residents with private residential water supplies of:

24 (1) The availability of free well water testing under this subsection; and

25 (2) The availability of grants under Title 30-A, section 4722, paragraph FF to pay
26 for drinking water treatment systems to reduce exposure to contaminants.
27 Outreach under this subparagraph must be conducted in consultation with the
28 Maine State Housing Authority.

29 **Sec. 2. 30-A MRSA §4722, sub-§1, ¶FF**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 322, §1, is
30 further amended to read:

31 FF. Provide grants to eligible homeowners who are served by private well water that
32 shows evidence of ~~high levels of arsenic contamination~~ a contaminant described in
33 Title 22, section 2602-A, subsection 3 in an amount that exceeds state standards. For
34 purposes of this paragraph, "homeowner" includes an individual who occupies a single-
35 family dwelling that is located on land that is owned by a member of that individual's
36 immediate family and "immediate family" means a spouse, parent, child, sibling,
37 stepchild, stepparent and grandparent;

38 SUMMARY

39 This bill adds contaminants to the Department of Health and Human Services' uniform
40 testing recommendation for private wells. The bill requires a program to provide free
41 testing for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in household well water of low-

1 income residents through contracts with qualified laboratories. The department is required
2 to conduct educational outreach to make low-income residents aware of the availability of
3 free testing of well water and eligibility for grants from the Maine State Housing Authority
4 to pay for water treatment systems. The bill clarifies that homeowners served by well water
5 that exceeds state standards for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances and other
6 contaminants are eligible for the grants.