

Testimony of Johanna Davis, farmer at Villageside Farm, Freedom ME.
In SUPPORT of LD 1488, **'An Act to Expand Testing for Perfluoroalkyl & Polyfluoroalkyl
Substances to Private Drinking Water Wells'**

Before the Health and Human Services Committee

April 28th, 2023

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Johanna Davis. I live and work at Villageside Farm in Freedom, ME. Please accept this testimony in support of LD 1214, which would help protect renters and home buyers from PFAS exposure.

Toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or “forever chemicals” are used in thousands of everyday products and manufacturing processes. PFAS accumulate in our wastewater and can contaminate the land and groundwater when sludge is applied to farmland.

PFAS pose significant health risks, including kidney cancer, reduced vaccine response, elevated cholesterol, reduced infant birthweight, and more. Low income communities, communities of color, tribal, and rural communities are disproportionately impacted and more susceptible to health and financial impacts of PFAS contamination. Children are disproportionately exposed.

In 2021 my family's well was tested for pfas and came back over 8000 ppb. Now my partner and I as well as our five year old child have industrial levels of these chemicals in our bodies. Our property happened to be on a DEP licensed sludge spreading site however, significant quantities of contaminated sludge have been sold to landscapers, home gardeners and farms across the state as sludge-based compost. This material needed no DEP application license. **The State has no record of locations where drinking water wells might be at risk of contamination from sludge-based compost.** Additionally, at least **25 Maine schools** and daycare facilities have water supplies above Maine's interim drinking water standard of 20 parts per trillion, suggesting that **6,650 children and young adults** currently enrolled at those schools have been exposed to high levels of PFAS while at school. Contaminated school wells are rarely located anywhere near documented sludge spreading sites. **The source of that contamination remains unknown.**

Clean water is a basic human right. When a property is to be sold or leased out the buyer/renter should know whether the water is safe to drink. This is simple.

The medium and long-term economic benefits to investing in public health are enormous. **Preventing toxic exposure is always cheaper than cost of medical care for patients dealing with PFAS linking illnesses.** Our communities have a higher economic productivity when they Mainers are healthy.

I urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1488.

Thank you for your time,
Johanna Davis, farmer, Freedom Maine.

