

Testimony of Johanna Davis, *farmer, Freedom Maine*
In SUPPORT of LD 1006,
"An Act to Ensure Access to Healthy Drinking Water from Household Wells in Rural Maine
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. Please accept this testimony in support of LD 1006, which would help expand access to clean drinking water to low income Mainers.

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 from a variety of sources. **PFAS pose significant health risks, including kidney cancer**, reduced vaccine response, elevated cholesterol, reduced infant birth weight, 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.

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.

We can assume there are additional, impacted drinking water wells that remain to be identified. We need to ensure that everyone has access to clean drinking water – including low income Mainers. The state can add the PFAS test to its existing list of subsidized water tests, like radon and arsenic.

All people in Maine deserve to drink clean water. Please help make this possible.

I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1006.

Thank you for your time,

Johanna Davis, farmer, Freedom Maine.