



Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

LD 73 - An Act to Require Bottled Water Companies to Monitor for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

&

LD 75 - An Act to Establish Maximum Contaminant Levels Under the State's Drinking Water Rules to Prohibit Certain Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

Jacquelyn Elliott | April, 28, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Chair; Representative Meyer, Chair: Honorable Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony **IN SUPPORT OF LD 73 AND LD 75**. I would like to address both bills at this time as they are related in their intent to provide safe drinking water.

My name is Jacquelyn Elliott and I live in Waterboro and I am providing this testimony as a Board Member on behalf of Slingshot. For three decades I have been an environmental health and justice advocate. That journey began when my community was assaulted by pollution from a waste-to-energy incinerator and a leaking ash landfill threatening a source of our drinking water.

Slingshot is an environmental justice organization who works together with people most impacted by pollution and public health threats to take aim at polluters and build community power. Slingshot believes whatever toxic hazard your community is facing; you have the right to make your voice heard and to create the changes you want to see. Slingshot is a team of seasoned organizers, who bring decades of experience in the region to organize alongside communities for a healthier, more just world.

Slingshot also co-facilitates the National PFAS Contamination Coalition, which is composed of 30 community groups from across the country, including Maine, that are directly impacted by PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances). The coalition is fighting for a world where people are not exposed to any PFAS, where there is justice for the victims of PFAS exposure, and where laws and regulations prevent contamination disasters like this from happening again.

We have been at the side of Maine communities facing the harmful impacts of drinking water contaminated by PFAS. From this work, we have witnessed the harm PFAS have on our bodies, families, and environment.

Maine is having to step up and take the lead on the response to the horror of our contaminated communities. Drinking water is a primary pathway for PFAS contamination and people are losing access to the availability of safe drinking water.

Bottled water is often the stop-gap measure to meet that emergency. **LD 73 and LD 75** provide a means to mitigate the PFAS threats that may be posed by drinking bottled water. It is critical that we require bottled water producers to provide water that is free of PFAS contamination. Especially, if the consumers are people seeking safe drinking water because their drinking water is contaminated with toxics.

PFAS are [ubiquitous](#)¹ in our environment and our bodies. They are linked to kidney and other cancers, and are disruptive to reproductive and immune systems interfering with immunization protections primarily with children. Scientific evidence is demonstrating that there is no safe level for exposure and that all organ systems are [impacted](#)². These bills are steps in the right direction but should be made stronger and require testing results at minimum that meet the evolving [EPA](#)³ (Environmental Protection Agency) standards.

Slingshot supports the greatest protections for drinking water and would urge the Committee to strengthen **the requirements for LD 75 and vote OUGHT TO PASS**. Thank you for considering these comments.

Jacquelyn Elliott, Board Member
Slingshot
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¹ Environmental Working Group, *PFAS Chemicals the 'forever chemicals' in 99% of Americans*, <https://www.ewg.org/what-are-pfas-chemicals>

² Emanuel, Gabrielle, February 13, 2023, *Tracing the path of toxic 'forever chemicals' inside the body*, "Not only do we all have PFAS in our bodies, but we also know that PFAS affects almost every organ system. I'm not sure I know a tissue or organ system where effects haven't been reported." Dr. Linda Birnbaum, former director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program: <https://www.wbur.org/news/2023/02/16/pfas-biology-blood-new-hampshire>

³ March 14, 2023, Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Proposed PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>