

To the members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to submit testimony against the bill LD 1537.

As you know PFAS/PFOS, are called forever chemicals because they can reside in the environment for decades. Excerpts from the May 14, 2023 edition of the Portland Press Herald at this link [PFAS exposure leaves Maine people wondering: What is it doing to us? \(pressherald.com\)](https://www.pressherald.com/2023/05/14/pfas-exposure-leaves-maine-people-wondering-what-is-it-doing-to-us/) indicate that even trace amounts have been linked to compromised immune systems, low birth weights, and several types of cancer.

Excerpt #1:

“Exactly what is safe is also still not clear. A proposed federal EPA standard would be stricter than Maine law. While not directly comparable to the Maine standard, it would lower the threshold for two PFAS chemicals to 4 parts per trillion in drinking water supplies, compared with the Maine standard of 20 parts per trillion among six PFAS chemicals. The federal standard is about the lowest level at which modern labs can detect PFAS.

If the EPA adopts the new standard, dozens of the well water and public drinking water sites that are currently below the standard will be considered contaminated.”

The reason for lowering toxic level standards is that it's not really yet known what levels of PFOS/PFAS are safe. Isn't it the role of government to protect its citizens? Why aren't you doing this? LD 1537 wouldn't do this.

Excerpt #2:

““The research is evolving. We are still defining what we don't know,” Criswell said.

Dr. Abby Fleisch, a MaineHealth pediatric endocrinologist, has been studying PFAS for more than a decade and published research with her colleagues that were used by the EPA to devise the new, lower standard. Fleisch's research includes a longitudinal study of more than 2,000 mothers and their children in the Boston area.

Because the blood samples from the late 1990s and early 2000s were preserved, scientists like Fleisch were able to draw new samples and compare PFAS exposure in mothers and infants over time. Scientists found that high PFAS exposure is associated with lower birth weight, obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol.”

With all due respect for Maine's government, let us recall that the proliferation of this toxic chemical disaster was promoted by the government of the State of Maine when it suggested and encouraged farmers to spread toxic laden sludge on the pristine, clean fields of Maine. The result of this action was to sicken its citizens, destroy their physical, mental and financial well-being. Despite this carnage, how is it even possible that the Legislature propose LD 1537 that would give exemptions to businesses for certain PFOS/PFAS chemicals even though alternatives are available? This would benefit the profitability of companies but throw salt in the wounds of thousands of Maine citizens. Such behavior is not only wrong minded, it is immoral.

Here is a list found on p. 2, Summary of Recommendations from the Managing PFAS in Maine, Final Report from the Maine PFAS Project in January 2020:

To be most protective of Maine citizens, now and in the future, we believe the following are of greatest importance:

- 1. Providing safe drinking water;**
- 2. Protecting our food supply;**
- 3. Identifying and investigating PFAS contaminants in the environment;**
- 4. Identifying and reducing uses of PFAS;**
- 5. Managing waste and waste residuals responsibly;**
- 6. Improving public education about PFAS;**
- 7. Promoting federal action; and**
- 8. Funding for state agencies to investigate, respond to and reduce exposure of Maine citizens to PFAS.**

Our recommendations reflect a commitment to determine where PFAS contaminants exist in Maine and put in place strategic responses to protect people from exposure. It is important to recognize that some of the actions recommended will require additional public processes and funding to develop and implement the specific related tasks. The following report details recommendations the Task Force has identified that fulfill the Governor's charge.

I submit that LD 1537 undercuts the recommendations of this task force, formed by the Governor in 2020. Certainly bullets 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 are trampled by the proposed LD 1537. Therefore I am against the passage of LD1537 and so should you.

Further to the point on p. 4 and 5 of this same report,

#### **“Human Exposure Concerns**

Scientists are still learning about the potential health effects from exposure to PFAS chemicals. Four specific PFAS chemicals - PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS and PFNA - have been studied more extensively than other PFAS. According to the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), studies in humans with PFAS exposure have shown that these chemicals may:<sup>1</sup>

1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR). *Perfluoroalkyls - ToxFAQs™* (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts200.pdf>.

2 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR). *PFAS An Overview of the Science and Guidance for Clinicians on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)*. (2019). Retrieved from [https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/docs/ATSDR\\_PFAS\\_ClinicalGuidance\\_12202019.pdf](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/docs/ATSDR_PFAS_ClinicalGuidance_12202019.pdf).

3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR). *Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and Your Health. What are the health effects?* (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects.html>.

- increase cholesterol levels;
- decrease how well the body responds to vaccines;
- increase the risk of thyroid disease;
- decrease fertility in women;
- increase the risk of high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnant women;
- lower infant birth weights; however, the decrease in birth weight is small and may not affect the infant's health; and
- increase risk of kidney cancer or testicular cancer.<sup>2</sup>

Studies with laboratory animals exposed to high doses of one or more of these PFAS have shown changes in liver, thyroid, pancreatic function, and hormone levels. <sup>3</sup> “

This report, *Summary of Recommendations from the Managing PFAS in Maine, Final Report from the Maine PFAS Project in January 2020* essentially gives testimony from the state itself, the LD 1537 is wrong minded because it does not promote the recommendations of this task force, nor does it protect the citizens of Maine from further damage due to the proliferation and long life of PFOS and PFAS chemicals.

Stop LD 1537. The very notion of it is repugnant given the damage already done by the State of Maine with regard to forever chemicals.

Respectfully,

Gary Hazard