

Adrienne Lee
Knox
LD 130

Good Morning. Distinguished members of the Maine Legislature's Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee..My name is Adrienne Lee. My husband Ken Lamson and I own and operate New Beat Farm in Knox, Maine, Waldo County. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am testifying in support of LD130.

Our farm is comprised of 94 acres of fields and forest and we have been farming this land since 2012, growing MOFGA Certified Organic Produce and Cut flowers for our local community through farmers markets and wholesale outlets. Three years ago we discovered that some of our farmland, irrigation and well water were contaminated with high levels of PFAS. This discovery put us in a tailspin trying to figure out if we could find a viable path forward farming this land as well as processing the fact that our family all had very high levels of PFAS in our bodies.

The only reason that I can speak to you today, and talk about our farm in the present tense, is due to the States creation of the PFAS Fund and the work that DACF has done to support Maine farmers who are dealing with PFAS. At this point, three years post discovery, our farm is still on shaky ground but with support of resources from the PFAS Fund, we have identified ways that our farm can find a economically viable path forward and continue to provide our community with safe and nutritious food. We have received support from the PFAS Fund in a variety of ways. That being said, we know that by staying farming on this land that we will forever be dealing with these "Forever Chemicals". Making farming "work" while managing PFAS will be an ongoing, ever evolving process. We are not alone in that, and in that vein it seems critical that the work of the PFAS Fund should be built into a more permanent PFAS Response Program for the State.

Along with being an affected farmer I also sit on the PFAS Fund Advisory Committee and have helped to develop the programs that have been put in place. Figuring out how to properly address this complex issue has been no small task, and the Fund and DACF have learned some things along the way as to how best to support both farmers and Ag adjacent community members affected by PFAS. In that vein I urge you to support the Department recommended improvements to the PFAS Fund and support this bill as written to maintain vital assistance for Maine's agricultural community.

Sincerely,
Adrienne Lee
New Beat Farm
Knox, ME