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Maine's Rural Development Council

**Testimony of Nancy Smith, CEO of GrowSmart Maine  
in support of LD 222, An Act To Establish A Take-Back And Disposal  
Program For Firefighting And Fire-Suppressing Foam To Which  
Perfluoroalkyl And Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Have Been Added**

February 26, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Nancy Smith, I live in Ellsworth, and I am the CEO of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan non-profit organization helping communities navigate change in alignment with smart growth. We advocate for comprehensive policies and funding for smart growth practices and outcomes.

GrowSmart joined the Environmental Priorities Coalition this year, and we appreciate this opportunity to support an important bill that might not have come to our attention otherwise. We continue to support efforts to protect farmers and farmland from PFAS contamination, and we also recognize the threat posed by AFFF. Sites across Maine are storing an estimated 50,000 gallons of AFFF, and there are no established systems for collection and management of this toxic foam.

While better fire suppression options are now available, there is an urgent need to dispose of AFFF no longer in use. It is appropriate for the state to take a leading role in collecting and disposing of these chemicals. Resources are strained for all municipalities; particularly the small cities and rural communities where GrowSmart focuses most of our technical assistance work.

This includes Presque Isle, where CEO Tim St. Peter notes, "This is a good idea. I firmly believe we need to do more and be proactive in protecting our environment, and this bill will be a step in doing so."

GrowSmart Maine is willing to assist the committee with this bill in any way that is helpful.