

TO: The Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Maine State Legislature

RE: Support for the Following 3 Related Bills: LD 400; AFFF Reporting Requirement: LD 222; AFFF Take-Back Program: LD 407; Brunswick Landing Cleanup by 2026

February 25, 2025

Dear Chairperson Doudera and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of Topsham, a **member of the Brunswick Area Citizens for a Safe Environment** and also **represent Topsham on the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for the remediation and re-use of the former Brunswick Naval Air Station (BNAS)**. I am writing to you to encourage you to support all three of the AFFF related bills currently before your committee. Specifically, I strongly urge you to **pass the bills including LD 400**, which seeks to establish reporting requirements for AFFF storage, **LD 222**, which creates a take-back program for AFFF to ensure safe collection, storage, and disposal, and **LD 407**, which ensures the removal of all remaining AFFF from Brunswick Landing by 2026.

Research has shown that PFAS exposure can cause adverse health effects. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine formed a special committee (Committee on the Guidance on PFAS Testing and Health Outcomes) to study this. The committee found “*strong evidence*” and “*sufficient risk*” of an association for increased risk of kidney cancer in adults, decreased antibody responses (in adults and children), high cholesterol (in adults and children), and decreased infant and fetal growth.

According to the EPA, peer-reviewed scientific studies show PFAS “*may cause*” decreased fertility or increased high blood pressure in pregnant women, increased risk of prostate and testicular cancers, reduced ability of the body’s immune system to fight infections, and increased risk of obesity.

Comments on: LD 407: *An Act to Prohibit the Use of Aqueous Film-forming Foam at the Former Brunswick Naval Air Station.*

LD 407 ensures the removal of all remaining AFFF from Brunswick Landing by 2026, eliminating the risk of another major spill at this site. The PFOS-based AFFF in Hangar 4 were lost in the spill of August 2024 and approximately 800 gallons remain in Hangar 6. In addition, there are here are still 1000’s of gallons of AFFF stored on the former base in Hangars 5 and 7, managed by the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA). There is a very real risk of spillage from Hangar 6 which would be very serious due to its proximity to the Brunswick Topsham Water District drinking water well field as well as nearby businesses. The track record shows that MRRA is not responsible in managing the complex military grade fire-suppression systems in the airport hangars.

Comments on LD 400: *Resolve, Directing the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal to Compile a Statewide Inventory of Aqueous Film-forming Foam Concentrate.*

Although the dangers of PFAS-based AFFF were long recognized, it was when PFOS was finally placed on the Superfund List in April 2024 that this toxic forever chemical could be effectively regulated.

There will certainly be more PFAS compounds added to the Superfund List. This is important because in the past, the dangers of PFAS-based AFFF were not recognized and stocks of these materials were freely distributed. For example, after MRRRA took ownership of the Airport from the Navy, AFFF materials were given to fire departments and municipalities around the State. Because PFOS was likely the foaming agent in the AFFF sent out to fire departments, the simple fact that PFOS is now officially a hazardous substance under CERCLA means that it must not be used as a fire suppressant by anybody. **LD400** is the first step in getting this dangerous situation under control by establishing a critical reporting system for locations storing AFFF.

Comments on 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.

LD 222 takes this one step further by creating a take-back program to safely collect and store AFFF until a safe disposal method is available. The risk of having containers of AFFF spread around the State represents an unacceptable risk to individuals, water supplies, and communities. There is also a risk of occupational exposure to PFAS. Because very low concentrations of PFAS are considered hazardous, the release of this material in fire suppression activities can cause a major pollution incident. While a take-back and disposal program would be costly, the consequences of a repeat of the 2024 AFFF spill at Brunswick Landing or elsewhere in Maine would prove to be equally costly. The issue is not whether Maine can afford to do this, but whether Maine can afford the consequences of not implementing LD222.

As a former Epidemiologist with the Maine CDC with a work history in hazardous waste risk assessment for federal facilities, I live near the BNAS in Topsham and I have strong concerns regarding the potential for future releases of AFFF foam. The toxicity of PFAS compounds has not yet been fully understood and I fear the long-term effects will be found to be greater than we now know.

Conclusion: I believe that **LD 400**, **LD 222**, and **LD 407** are essential steps to safeguarding Maine's environment, protecting public health, and ensuring responsible management of AFFF. Failure to enact these will cost the State of Maine far more than the costs associated with their enactment and implementation. Other states, including New Hampshire and Colorado, have adopted safer alternatives and established collection programs. I urge you to vote in favor of these bills and take action to prevent further harm from PFAS chemicals in Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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