



Testimony of Maine Public Health Association 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

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

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Room 216, Cross State Office Building
Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Good morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland, and executive director of Maine Public Health Association. MPHA is 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” and 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.”

MPHA is the state’s oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 850 individual members and 70 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges, aiming to improve the policies, systems, and environments that underlie health inequities – but which also have potential to improve health outcomes for all people in Maine. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine’s communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

LD 222 would provide funding and resources to allow safe removal and eventual disposal of harmful aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF). LD 400 would establish an inventory of public locations that contain AFFF and would collect similar information from private sources. The inventory would then be submitted to the legislature.

Maine has been a national leader in preventing and addressing contamination from toxic per- and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS). These two bills work together to garner a greater sense of the scope of the problem across the state (through the inventory) and the provision of funding and resources to safely remove and eventually dispose of these harmful substances.

PFAS are found in air, soil, surface water, and groundwater (including drinking water); food and food packaging; commercial household products; and some living organisms (where PFAS have accumulated over time). PFAS remain in the body for long periods of time (anywhere from months to years) after they have entered it. PFAS contamination has been identified in well-water sources and farm fields across the state of Maine, putting those who rely on those resources at risk of hazardous chemical exposures.¹

PFAS exposure may reduce antibody responses to vaccines^{2,3} and infectious disease resistance.⁴ PFAS exposure can also alter metabolism⁵ and fertility,⁶ reduce fetal growth, and increase the risk of being overweight or obese.⁷ PFAS exposure has also been associated with several chronic health problems, including increased cholesterol levels, liver dysfunction, and increased risk of testicular and kidney cancers.⁸ A recent review of the research literature explored the relationship between PFAS exposure and children's health. Six associations with health were identified: early puberty onset, immunity/infection/asthma, thyroid and renal function, cardio-metabolic measures, and neurodevelopmental/attention.⁹

Given the human and environmental health risks associated with PFAS, prevention of exposure must be a priority. We support the intentions of these bills and believe they are protective of public health. We respectfully request you vote LDs 222 and 400 "Ought to Pass." Thank you.

¹Maine Department of Environmental Protection. 2019. [Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances \(PFAS\)](#).

²Grandjean P, Heilmann C, Weihe P, et al. 2017. Estimated exposures to perfluorinated compounds in infancy predict attenuated vaccine antibody concentrations at age 5-years. *J Immunotoxicol*,14(1):188-195.

³Looker C, Luster MI, Calafat AM, et al. 2014. Influenza vaccine response in adults exposed to perfluorooctanoate and perfluorooctanesulfonate. *Toxicol Sci*,138(1):76-88.

⁴National Toxicology Program. 2016. [Monograph on immunotoxicity associated with exposure to perfluorooctanoic acid \(PFOA\) and perfluorooctane sulfonate \(PFOS\)](#). Research Triangle Park, NC: National Toxicology Program.

⁵Liu G, Dhana K, Furtado JD, Rood J, Zong G, Liang L, Qi L, Bray GA, DeJonge L, Coull B, Grandjean P, Sun Q. 2018. Perfluoroalkyl substances and changes in body weight and resting metabolic rate in response to weight-loss diets: A prospective study. *PLoS Med*,15(2):e1002502.

⁶Bach CC, Vested A, Jorgensen K, Bonde JP, Henriksen TB, Toft G. 2016. Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances and measures of human fertility: A systematic review. *Crit Rev Toxicol*,46(9):735-55.

⁷Braun J. 2017. Early-life exposure to EDCs: Role in childhood obesity and neurodevelopment. *Nat Rev Endocrinol*,13(3):161–173.

⁸Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. 2022. [What are the health effects of PFAS?](#)

⁹Rappazzo KM, Coffman E & Hines EP. 2017. Exposure to perfluorinated alkyl substances and health outcomes in children: A systematic review of the epidemiologic literature. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(7):691.