



Testimony in Support of LD 400 LD 222 LD 407 PFAS/AFFF

Presented by Mariel Geiger

Surfrider Foundation, Maine Chapter Climate Action Chair & Policy Lead

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Chairpersons, esteemed members of the committee, and fellow advocates,

My name is Mariel Geiger, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation's Maine Chapter, where I serve as Climate Action Chair and Policy Lead. We **strongly support** the proposed legislation addressing PFAS contamination, including the urgent need to eliminate the use of **Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF)**, improve accountability, and implement safer alternatives.

The Surfrider Foundation is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the world's oceans, waves, and beaches for all people. Our mission includes advocating for clean water and stopping pollution at its source—**before it enters the environment and causes irreversible harm**. Toxic chemicals like PFAS threaten marine ecosystems, coastal economies, and public health, making it essential that we take action now to prevent further contamination of Maine's waters.

PFAS, or "forever chemicals," are among the most persistent pollutants in our environment, bioaccumulating in our waterways, soil, wildlife, and even human bodies. These toxic chemicals are **linked to severe health risks**, including cancer, immune system suppression, and reproductive harm. Despite their widespread dangers, PFAS continue to be released into Maine's environment at alarming rates, with disastrous consequences.

The August 2024 PFAS spill at Brunswick Landing is a sobering reminder of what's at stake. More than 1,450 gallons of AFFF concentrate mixed with 50,000 gallons of water entered the Androscoggin River and Harpswell Cove—critical waterways that sustain ecosystems and local communities. We still do not know the full extent of this contamination, but we do know one thing: PFAS chemicals are 'forever chemicals'. This means our water, fisheries, and public health will suffer long after the initial spill is forgotten.

Fire departments and facilities storing AFFF are left without viable disposal options, leaving them vulnerable to further spills and liabilities. Meanwhile, safer, effective alternatives already

exist and are increasingly adopted across the country. By passing these bills, Maine can protect first responders, prevent future contamination, and take meaningful action against corporate polluters who have long profited at the expense of public health and environmental integrity.

Maine has already been a leader in addressing PFAS chemical pollution. Now, we must continue that momentum by eliminating the use of PFAS-laden firefighting foams, investing in remediation efforts, and ensuring that industries using these toxic chemicals are held accountable for their impacts.

On behalf of Surfrider Maine, I urge you to support this legislation to safeguard our environment, communities, and future generations from toxic PFAS contamination. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mariel Geiger | Maine Chapter Climate Action Chair and Policy Lead
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Protecting & preserving the world's oceans, beaches and coastline!