

Jane Nichols-Ecker
Brunswick
LD 407

To the Environment and Natural Resource Committee:

I write today to ask that you support bill LD407 which mandates the removal of fluorinated fire suppression chemicals by the end of this calendar year at the former Naval Air Station, managed by the Midcoast Regional Development Authority. I thought that on the day of the spill in August 2024 that the systems should be immediately shut down, it was such a startling and horrendous event. We all learned that MRRA had not kept up with the inspections, maintenance of the fire suppressant systems, nor was the DEP keeping up with the oversight of the AFF systems, as had been required and expected, otherwise they would have known long before now that the systems could have been shut down long ago. The DEP did not do periodic monitoring of this highly hazardous family of fluorinated chemicals at the old Naval Air Station even when it was known that the systems were, are, very old, and there had been a previous release into the surrounding environment, as well as the fact that there are alternatives to these chemicals that can be used as effective fire suppressants. MRRA did not care, did not take seriously the environmental and health risks of the potential breakdown of the old systems. MRRA and its Board of Directors have failed the community, they have told untruths since the onset of the event in August. The Town Council, the Town Manager the Fire Department, Friends of Casco Bay, BACSE, citizens have all had to act as sleuths and scientists to learn, to further understand the extensive risks of having the AFFF sitting, basically unused, in our community, and to learn of the failings of MRRA, and the DEP, to safeguard the residents, the environment and marine resources. MRRA only pursued an extensive fire suppressant evaluation by a national company when the Town pushed and contributed financial resources to help in having it done. MRRA has sacrificed the health of everyone in our communities and others by being negligent, actually, indifferent to the safety of us all.

I want to thank the committee, the legislature, for considering the passage of this very important bill. MRRA, and likely other entities, must realize the risks and hazards of ignoring important monitoring and safeguards that must be followed to protect communities in our beautiful state.