

Brian Abreu
Stockton Springs
LD 451

Hello, my name is Brian,

I am both an agricultural engineer and the farm owner of Abreu Acres, an organic farm in Stockton Springs, Maine. My farm has been tested for PFAS and has been cleared of contamination—something that is, unfortunately, becoming increasingly rare in our state. As a farmer and an agricultural professional, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact PFAS contamination has had on Maine's farming community. Once this contamination takes hold, it is nearly impossible to remove, and it has forced hardworking farmers off their land, stripping them of their livelihoods.

Now, I am faced with a troubling reality: There is currently a commercial solar array under review adjacent to my organic farm. It is a disgrace that the State of Maine would sacrifice productive, PFAS-free farmland for the installation of commercial solar arrays without first ensuring they are not introducing contamination. While I strongly support renewable energy and its expansion, we cannot afford to compromise our agricultural resources in the process. Protecting Maine's farmland should be a top priority, not an afterthought.

LD 451 is a necessary and commonsense measure to ensure that solar and wind energy developments are not unknowingly contributing to PFAS contamination. This bill requires baseline testing before construction and ongoing monitoring, ensuring that these projects remain truly "clean energy." If these developments are as environmentally responsible as they claim to be, there should be no hesitation in confirming that they are not introducing harmful substances into our land and water.

This bill holds developers accountable for any contamination they may cause—but responsibility should not stop there. Landowners who choose to lease their land for commercial solar development should also bear responsibility if contamination occurs. Ultimately, it is the landowner's decision whether or not to allow a solar installation on their property, and with that decision should come accountability. If contamination from a solar development affects neighboring properties or local watersheds, the landowner should be held responsible alongside the developer. Just as farmers are held accountable for what happens on their land, those who lease their land for industrial energy projects must also be responsible for any pollution that spreads beyond their property, potentially harming nearby farms, drinking water supplies, and ecosystems.

While LD 451 specifically addresses PFAS contamination, we should not stop there. The state must take a broader approach to ensuring that all forms of contamination—whether from heavy metals, solvents, plastics, or other hazardous substances—are not introduced through solar and wind developments. Renewable energy should not come at the cost of environmental and agricultural degradation. If these projects are to be truly sustainable, they must be held to the highest environmental standards to ensure they do not introduce new pollutants into Maine's land and water.

LD 451 strikes a critical balance between supporting renewable energy and protecting our natural resources. I urge the committee to pass this bill to safeguard Maine's agricultural industry, environment, and public health. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian

Agricultural Engineer & Farm Owner, Abreu Acres
Stockton Springs, Maine