

Support of LD 582, An Act to Require Health Insurance Carriers to Provide Coverage for Blood Testing for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances.

Advocating for Environmental Safety and Public Health

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Esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services.

I submit this testimony to voice my strong support for bill LD 528, which aims to ensure that health insurance carriers provide coverage for blood testing for PFAS and PFOS substances. This bill represents a critical step towards safeguarding the health and well-being of Maine residents who have been unwittingly exposed to these hazardous chemicals.

I reside on Coombs Road in Brunswick, Maine, a neighborhood recently impacted by the worst PFAS spill in Maine's history and the sixth worst spill of its kind in the country. This personal connection to the issue underscores the urgency and importance of addressing PFAS and PFOS contamination. My well was destroyed and several homeowners in my neighborhood received PFAS test results from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection in excess of 20ppt.

Those families were told in writing that no recommendations for remediation were being made by the DEP at this time. Those families continued to drink the water, exposing themselves to detrimental levels of PFAS because no agency communicated the real and present danger.

To protect our families and ensure a clean safe water supply, my neighbors and I have or are in the process of mitigating the destroyed wells at our own expense. I was forced to pay \$35,361.14. to hook our home up to town water. Depleting my retirement savings in the process to pay for the project. It is unacceptable that victims of this and other catastrophic PFAS toxic disasters cannot get blood testing paid for by insurance.

This added expense to victims is another level of injustice the legislature has the power to change.

The impacts of this catastrophic toxic PFAS disaster are real and potentially life threatening. There are many communities in Maine who have unfortunately been impacted by catastrophic levels of PFAS.

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) and PFOS (perfluoro octane sulfonate) are often referred to as "forever chemicals" due to their persistence in the environment and the human body. Studies have shown that these substances can lead to severe health issues, including cancer, liver damage, and developmental problems in children. However, the presence of these chemicals in our water, soil, and even our food supply has become alarmingly prevalent.

Brunswick Maine is a community in crisis. DEP test results of water, soil and air at Brunswick Landing, the former Naval Air Station supports PFAS/PFOS is present and persists. Children and Families live, attend pre-school, recreate and, play in this forever chemical environment every day. They deserve to have piece of mind and access to blood testing covered in whole by insurance.

By mandating coverage for blood testing, LD 528 will ensure that individuals can access crucial diagnostic tools without the burden of prohibitive costs. Early detection of PFAS and PFOS exposure is essential for effective medical intervention and for monitoring long-term health outcomes. Furthermore, this bill will help raise awareness about the risks associated with these substances and promote a proactive approach to public health.

In conclusion, passing LD 528 is not just a legislative measure, but a moral imperative to protect the health of our communities. I urge you to support this bill and to advocate for the necessary changes to our health insurance policies to address the growing threat of PFAS and PFOS contamination.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Self

Brunswick ,ME