

Testimony of Gail L. Carlson, Ph.D.

**In Opposition to LD 827** *An Act to Allow the Sale of Polymer-coated Cookware That Is Authorized for Food Contact by the United States Food and Drug Administration* and **LD 987** *An Act Clarifying Exemptions from the Notification Requirements for Products Containing PFAS*

Before the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
March 17, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Committee, thank you for reading my testimony. My name is Gail Carlson, and I live in Waterville. I hold a Ph.D. in biochemistry. I teach public health courses at Colby College, and I have conducted research on local PFAS contamination in water, soil and snow and soil, as well as impacts on farmers.

I am testifying **in opposition to LD 827**, which would add a nonsensical amendment to Maine's PFAS-in-products ban. Nonstick cookware, in its production, use and disposal, has absolutely contributed to environmental contamination by PFAS. Teflon production by Dupont and now Chemours is and has been a *major* source of PFAS in water and in the bodies of people whose drinking water is poisoned. PFAS chemicals emitted by these companies can also become transboundary pollutants, travel on air currents and fall back to earth to cause contamination both near and far. PFOA, one of the major PFAS pollutants that is a known human carcinogen and has been banned internationally because of its toxicity, came largely from fluoropolymer production. One of the PFOA substitutes used in fluoropolymer production, GenX, is now also a widespread contaminant and subject to federal regulation. Fluoropolymers also break down into microplastics in the environment, which, like PFAS, is a major category of environmental pollutant that gets into our bodies and has toxic effects. It makes no sense to exempt fluoropolymers from Maine's law.

Furthermore, PFAS-free cookware is readily available and affordable in the U.S. We should not be prolonging the use of fluoropolymers, a highly hazardous nonstick technology, when safer alternatives have been on the market for a long time.

I am also testifying **in opposition to LD 987**. Many of the products proposed for exemption in this bill are hazardous because they readily result in human exposures, e.g., textiles and refrigerants in motor vehicles, as well as artificial turf fields. (Artificial turf has PFAS in the plastic grass blades.) As Maine's law was being developed and refined in the legislature, care was taken to exempt those certain products for which substitution of PFAS is currently difficult. We do not need to add additional exemptions.

Maine's law is very important because it is designed to reduce human exposures to PFAS, many of which are very hazardous. Implementation of the law is being worked out right now at DEP, and these exemptions will delay this critical health protection. We need to protect the strong and swift PFAS response in Maine.

Please vote *ought not to pass* on LD 827 and LD 987. Thank you.