

Testimony of Christina Heiniger, PFAS Free Trenton, Trenton, Maine
In Opposition to LD 827 and LD 987
Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee
March 17th, 2025

Good morning, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Christina Heiniger. I live in Trenton Maine and have been active with a group here called PFAS Free Trenton. We are a group of Trenton residents who want to ensure clean PFAS-free water in our town now and for future generations. Please accept this testimony in opposition to LD 827 and LD 987, which would exempt PFAS-laden cookware, farm and garden equipment and other products from Maine's PFAS Products Law.

PFAS in cookware have been a health issue since the 1950's. You may have seen the film "Dark Waters". The film is based on the true story of American environmental attorney, Rob Bilott and his long, drawn out, seemingly unending battle with DuPont. The story was brought to wider public attention in 2016 with the publication of an article in the New York Times by Nathaniel Rich. If you haven't seen this film, I highly recommend it, along with the book *Stain-Resistant, Nonstick, Waterproof and Lethal: The Hidden Dangers of C8* (2007) by Callie Lyons, a Mid-Ohio Valley journalist who covered the controversy as it was unfolding.

Among the many relevant details from the film to this testimony, are the fact that DuPont, in it's nonstick pan plant in West Virginia, took pregnant women who were line workers off the line, because the company knew (though didn't publicly admit) that the PFAS in the nonstick coating caused birth defects. A long term longitudinal study was done on the residents of Parkersburg, WV where the plant was located. The results were overwhelmingly conclusive that the birth defects, cancers and some other health issues experienced by workers at the plant and residents of the town were directly related to the PFOA and other PFAS chemicals used to make nonstick cookware. DuPont knew for decades that it was contaminating water supplies in the area. Despite decades of litigation and scientific studies, the Federal Government is still dragging it's feet to properly regulate these chemicals.

Read this article and look at the photos-- you will never want to use a nonstick pan with PFAS again.
<https://www.ecowatch.com/teflons-toxic-legacy-dupont-knew-for-decades-it-was-contaminating-water-1882142514.html>

Cookware comes in direct contact with our food. I remember buying nonstick pan in the late 1980s as young adult. Very quickly, the nonstick coating started to flake off in tiny bits. Not knowing any better, I continued to use the pan. I shudder now at the thought of the toxic chemicals being mixed in with my food. Many people don't realize that using metal utensils with these pans or heating them above a medium cooking temperature destabilizes the chemicals in them, causing serious health risks. Since I have been made aware of the health risks of these products, I now only use stainless steel or cast iron pans. There are safe alternatives.

It is discouraging and shocking that cookware with this type of coating was not banned a decade or more ago. Maine has a chance to do the right thing here, and we need to continue to move forward to regulate these chemicals in consumer products. The PFAS Products Law (LD 1503/LD 1537) is a first in the world law that helps protect people from toxic PFAS in products. We must stand behind this. Several other states ban PFAS in the products listed in LD 987. This is doable and far overdue. The nonstick cookware industry has had a pass on this for far too long, and don't deserve any more.

The Maine legislature worked for 2 years to amend the law to help industry comply with it and provide exemptions for products where substituting PFAS would be difficult. At no point during those two years were concerns raised from the cookware industry. The concerns from the farm equipment manufacturers were not raised until the very last day of the process.

I urge you to vote unanimously "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 827 and LD 987.
Thank you for your time, Christina Heiniger, Trenton, Maine