



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
From: Matt Cannon, Sierra Club Maine
Date: March 17, 2025
Re: **Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 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**

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, I write on behalf of Sierra Club Maine, representing over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nationwide as we work towards combating climate change and promoting a just and sustainable economy. To that end, we urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" for L.D. 827.

This bill would weaken existing protections by exempting FDA-authorized polymer-coated cookware from PFAS regulations, despite growing evidence of harm associated with these chemicals.

A recent Ecology Center study found that manufacturers continue to use PFAS-based coatings, misleading consumers with claims like "PFOA-free" or "PFOS-free."¹ Many nonstick pans still contain PTFE (Teflon), a fluoropolymer linked to toxic emissions, environmental contamination, and serious health risks. The production of these chemicals pollutes air, water, and communities—most notably in North Carolina, where GenX contamination has been tied to cancer, liver and kidney disease, and immune system damage.

Public health concerns are clear: PTFE coatings can degrade and release toxic fumes when overheated, leading to conditions like "Teflon flu," which mimics flu-like symptoms. In 2023 alone, 267 cases were reported (according to America's Poison Centers)², yet most exposures go undiagnosed. The cookware industry claims safety under "normal conditions," but real-world use often leads to flaking, off-gassing, and ingestion of PFAS particles.

PFAS, known as "forever chemicals," persist in our bodies and the environment, contaminating drinking water and ecosystems. We have made significant progress in Maine to phase out their use. Exempting FDA-authorized polymer-coated cookware is a dangerous step backward. We urge the committee to uphold strong PFAS protections and reject L.D. 827

Sincerely,
Matt Cannon

¹ <https://www.ecocenter.org/our-work/protecting-communities-pfas-pollution>

² <https://www.poisonhelp.org/>

Sierra Club Maine
State Conservation & Energy Director