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March 25, 2025

Honorable Denise Tepler, Senate Chair
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: **Testimony 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**

Dear Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Members of the Committee of Environment and Natural Resources:

The Maine Water Environment Association (MeWEA) is a non-profit, all volunteer association of over 650 members. MeWEA represents a diverse group of water quality professionals throughout Maine including wastewater treatment plant operators, sewer collection system operators, utility system administrators, consulting engineers, suppliers, contractors, public works officials, stormwater system operators, and regulatory officials. The mission of MeWEA is to support and enhance Maine's water environment community through promoting training opportunities; supporting balanced environmental policy and practice; promoting education and collaboration with the public to protect and enhance Maine's water resources.

Discussion. As drafted, LD 827 allows the sale of cookware with a cooking surface containing the PFAS polytetrafluoroethylene, fluorinated ethylene propylene or perfluoroalkoxy alkane. Wastewater treatment districts are receivers, physically located between the environment and the residential, commercial, and industrial sources that use products with PFAS, produce these products, or manufacture these chemicals. The presence of these chemicals in wastewater and solids is linked to the impacts on our farms, tribal communities, fish and wildlife, and drinking water. The presence of PFAS in the environment has significant implications for the health of all Mainers.

The PFAS crisis continues to lead to challenges across the state. Water districts and wastewater treatment facilities are facing logistical hurdles and challenges to their daily operations. For wastewater utilities, these concerns include rising costs of trucking and landfilling biosolids and uncertainty about available options that can be relied upon to accept these residuals. Maine farmers are faced with contaminated water and crops which impact their health and livelihood. Residential well owners with high levels of PFAS in their drinking water worry about the impacts of decades of exposure will have on their families. Our tribal communities are prevented from safely using their traditional wild foods. Hunters and fisherman are likewise being asked to abandon cherished rural Maine traditions and, in some cases, have had to landfill their wild harvested meat. Maine communities are taking responsibility for a staggering problem they didn't create and can't fully control. For these reasons and more, we urge the importance of source reduction efforts, and insist industries make good faith efforts to comply.

While we work together to mitigate the existing problem, we need to turn off the PFAS tap all the way upstream before chemicals enter our state. This begins by assessing which products contain the chemicals, and giving Maine the tools to remove the products from store shelves so we can meet our PFAS source reduction goals. If science continues to suggest that the levels of these chemicals in our environment and our bodies should be very low, then the solution is ultimately to stop making and using products or items that contain PFAS.

Sincerely,

Theresa L Tucker

Theresa Tucker, President