



**APPALACHIAN
MOUNTAIN CLUB**
SINCE 1876

Testimony of Eliza Townsend

In support of LD 25

An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects

April 10, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, I am Eliza Townsend, Maine Conservation Policy Director for the Appalachian Mountain Club.

AMC is a people-oriented conservation nonprofit. Our mission is the protection, understanding, and enjoyment of the outdoors. We have 6,200 members in Maine and manage 130,000 acres of forestland in Piscataquis County for multiple use, including sustainable forestry, backcountry recreation, and outdoor education.

Clean water, clean air, and clean soils are essential to human and ecological health. We must ensure that Mainers, our food and our environment are free of the effects of toxic pollutants such as PFAS.

In recent years, Maine has been rocked by the high levels of contaminants found in agricultural soils, costing farming families their livelihoods and putting their future health at risk. The legislature was wise to prohibit the spreading of wastewater sludge three years ago, but that precaution means we need to find an alternative way to dispose of this material.

The current practice of sending wastewater sludge to landfills strains their capacity and risks further contamination via leakage. For example, high levels of PFAS contamination have been found at the Juniper Ridge Landfill, where leachate makes its way into the Penobscot River, home to and sustainer of the Penobscot Nation.

There is an alternative, however. LD 25 would provide bond funding to install dryers and digesters to reduce sludge volume and reduce it to a more manageable substance. It will also fund pilot projects to test additional sludge management technologies.

The result will be reduced pressure on landfills, and reduced risk of leakage and contamination of our waters and land with forever chemicals.

This makes a tremendous amount of sense, and we urge you to support LD 25.