

**Testimony of Pat Ianni, Falmouth, ME, 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  
Before the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs***

**April 10, 2025**

I am a resident of Falmouth and a retired environmental scientist, and in that capacity, I worked for almost four decades in the area of hazardous waste investigation and site remediation and regulatory compliance. As part of that work, in more recent years, I have studied the research on the manufacture, use, exposure, toxicity, and disposal of products containing an expansive list of hazardous chemicals included in the class referred to as “PFAS”.

Given that we don't have many known “point sources” discharging this large class of chemicals in Maine, it has become apparent that most of the PFAS found in our wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) sludge are originating from us – that is, every time we “flush”, our body load contributes more and more PFAS to the wastes that flow into our WWTP. Thus, the sewage sludge generated by these facilities is now known to contain very high levels of PFAS. As we have all painfully learned since the early discovery, circa 2016, of PFAS contamination at the dairy farm in Alfred, we can no longer dispose of or re-purpose the septic sludge generated by our WWTP's across Maine as fertilizer on farm fields. Consequently, we are now faced with the difficult decision of what to do with all the WWTP sewage sludge contaminated with PFAS that cannot be remediated for reuse. And sadly, to date, these wastes cannot be destroyed via incineration or other available remediation technology. Thus, our only current alternative to manage this PFAS-contaminated sewage sludge is to landfill it.

As many of you know, Maine's landfills are struggling to handle these wastes because of the great volume being generated on a daily basis across the state and the high liquid content which is not typically amenable to landfilling due to the unstable nature of the sludge unless it can be dried and/or stabilized with bulky waste materials. Additionally, because of the chemical nature of the strong carbon-fluorine bond, these chemicals are very persistent and do not easily break down into smaller, less toxic chemicals. Thus, they are referred to as “forever” chemicals.

Consequently, because of the very common use of these chemicals in so many products since the 1940s, and the fact that they do not easily degrade into less harmful chemicals, they have become ubiquitous in our environment and in ourselves.

As noted on the USEPA website, the health effects associated with exposure to PFAS are difficult to specify for many reasons, such as:

- There are thousands of PFAS with potentially varying effects and toxicity levels, yet most studies focus on a limited number of better known PFAS compounds.
- People can be exposed to PFAS in different ways and at different stages of their life.
- The types and uses of PFAS change over time, which makes it challenging to track and assess how exposure to these chemicals occurs and how they will affect human health.

None the less, the USEPA states that current peer-reviewed scientific studies have shown that exposure to certain levels of PFAS may lead to:

- Reproductive effects such as decreased fertility or increased high blood pressure in pregnant women.
- Developmental effects or delays in children, including low birth weight, accelerated puberty, bone variations, or behavioral changes.
- Increased risk of some cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers.
- Reduced ability of the body's immune system to fight infections, including reduced vaccine response.
- Interference with the body's natural hormones.
- Increased cholesterol levels and/or risk of obesity.

Thus, the two absolutely necessary actions needed to address this growing challenge in our State and across the world are: (1) the development of ***destruction technologies*** so we can not only treat the sludge, but so we can better manage all of the wastes containing these compounds; and (2) accessing the ***funding*** to manage the PFAS-containing wastes we inevitably will continue to generate for decades to come.

This bill is a first step in addressing the second action – the funding. While a bond of \$50,000,000 seems extreme, it will likely only be a first step in funding the necessary work needed to be done to manage the PFAS contaminated bio-solids we all generate now and will continue to generate for years to come. Therefore, I urge the AFA Committee to take the first big step and vote **Ought To Pass** on **LD 25 – An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects.**