

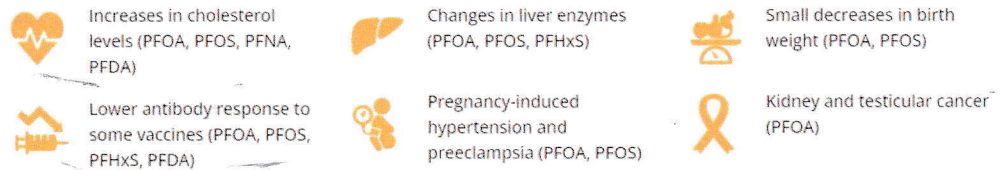
Testimony in favor of LD 1326 from Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH (Hallowell)

Sen. Ingwersen, Rep. Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing as a representative of **PSR Maine** an organization of hundreds of physicians, nurses, and other health professionals concerned about environmental factors that affect health. I'm sure by now you are all aware that widespread PFAS contamination is one of those factors.

Why are PFAS compounds such a problem? Firstly, because of their **prolonged half-life** in nature – aptly called “forever chemicals.” Equally concerning and less publicized, however, is their **environmental mobility**. They have the unique ability to make their way through geologic barriers. PFAS in treated sewage (or from a leak as in Brunswick) makes its way into surrounding rivers, groundwaters and aquifers. My own hometown of Hallowell is a good demonstration of this point, where our public water supply testing revealed levels that exceed the safety standard. The source of the problem was the Kennebec.


As more human and animal studies accumulated over the last decade, the adverse health effects of PFAS exposure became apparent at lower and lower levels. As an EPA fact sheet accessible online states: “PFAS exposure over a long period of time can cause cancer and other serious illnesses that decrease quality of life or result in death. PFAS exposure during critical life stages such as pregnancy or early childhood can also result in adverse health impacts.” A summary of some of the documented effects are below, from the National Academy of Sciences 2022 guidelines --



The acceptable levels delineated in this bill are not overly aggressive. There are some PFAS compounds (PFOA, PFOS) where levels down to ZERO have measurable adverse population outcomes. The numbers proposed by this bill are compromises made by a team of toxicologists and public policy experts trying to design meaningful but achievable standards.

It appears that the Federal EPA is in the process of dismantling many safety regulations. Water quality will soon likely be the sole responsibility of the states. PSR Maine urges the committee to vote “ought to pass” for LD 1326.

Sincerely,


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