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Testimony of Senator Henry Ingwersen supporting

LD 2115, An Act to Protect Private Wells from Hazardous Substances

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and the esteemed Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. I am Senator Henry Ingwersen, and I proudly represent Senate District 32, which includes Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Hollis, and Lyman. Today, I offer testimony in strong support of Representative Ankeles' [LD 2115](#), "An Act to Protect Private Wells from Hazardous Substances."

Given this committee's work on PFAS, some of you likely know why I care deeply about this issue. Ground zero for the PFAS contamination crisis is located in my hometown of Arundel. It's where Stone Ridge Dairy Farm became the center of a statewide crisis, caused by the spreading of sludge on farmland – not just in Arundel, but also across the entire state. Since then, over several years, the Maine DEP has been testing farms known to be sites where sludge was used as a fertilizer.

While, from a public health standpoint, we had an obligation to test the produce, soil, and water, we also had an obligation to help the farmers who, through no fault of their own, lost their entire livelihoods – sometimes overnight. That's why I proudly supported the PFAS Response Program and the PFAS Fund, which provide critical assistance to farmers. For as long as these impacted farmers need assistance to get back on their feet, I will continue to support this work. That road to recovery can be long, and I intend to be with them every step of the way.

At the same time, I was concerned about the use of PFAS in everyday consumer products, like cookware. Some of these items directly expose consumers to PFAS contamination, whether they clean or cook with the product – and sometimes wear it. Each day, more research and studies are finding out about the harmful impact of PFAS on human health – negative effects on cognitive, developmental, neurological, and reproductive systems. You don't have to be a doctor to realize it's deeply concerning.

That's why I was determined to work with this committee to phase out the use of PFAS in these products. Earlier this year, I was relieved, especially after the Board of Environmental Protection rejected several industry requests for exemptions that would have dramatically reduced the benefits of the new law, that the ban on more categories of items went into effect.

As a grandfather, I would be horrified to know that I was exposing any of my grandkids to PFAS, putting them at a higher risk for cancer, while babysitting them or preparing an afterschool snack for them. If all parents and grandparents were aware of the danger, I know they would feel the same way. It's no different than banning lead, and other toxic things, from the toys they play with.

Thank you for indulging me while I shared some of this legislative – and personal – history with all of you. Now, let's turn our attention to this bill.

With LD 2115, we have an opportunity to continue to address the PFAS crisis, which has hurt Maine's farms and farmers – sometimes to the point of bankruptcy and foreclosure – and put our children's health at risk. So far, the Legislature has not taken action to help Mainers test their private wells for dangerous levels of PFAS. I am most worried about the Mainers in rural areas who lack access to a public water supply, of course.

I'm a father and a grandfather, so I know what it's like to worry about your kids and your grandkids. (When I was a teacher, then I worried about *everyone's* kids – not just my own.) I know how you have to make tough budget decisions to buy clothes, pay bills, and put food on the table. One thing that parents shouldn't have to worry about is whether or not the water that flows from their faucets is poisoning their kids.

Unless we take action on all fronts, PFAS will remain a real threat in Maine. If we take this step – with LD 2115 – to help homeowners test their private wells, install filtration systems, and remediate their drinking water, then we can get closer to eradicating it once and for all.

I thank the Committee for its time, and I urge all of you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2115.



Henry Ingwersen
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Arundel, Biddeford, Dayton, Hollis, and Lyman