

**TO:** Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

**RE:** Support for LD 2115

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the committee,

I urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 2115, *An Act to Protect Private Wells from Hazardous Substances*, which would provide dedicated resources and authority for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to test, monitor, and respond to hazardous contamination of private drinking water wells, including PFAS “forever chemicals.”

I live in Brunswick, where the largest spill of PFAS-containing firefighting foam in Maine took place in 2024 at the Brunswick Executive Airport.

It was a very upsetting and confusing time for the community and especially for my neighbors who have private drinking water wells.

After the spill, residents asked both the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA is the state-created, quasi-municipal entity that runs the airport where the foam spill took place) and the Navy (which originally purchased the toxic foam and still owns the hangar) for assistance; none provided testing, remediation, or even bottled water.

It was the Maine DEP that stepped in to provide well testing for homes near the airport.

DEP’s testing in Brunswick was crucial: it identified contaminated wells so affected families could take protective actions (connect to municipal water, install filters, or use bottled water).

But I also saw how rapidly the DEP’s resources could be strained during an emergency. Unfortunately, DEP only assisted with well testing costs. Residents still had to pay all remediation costs. I still worry about those who have contaminated water but are unable to pay for water treatment systems.

What happened at Brunswick in 2024 involved astonishingly high quantities of PFAS, to be sure, but the problem is not unique to Brunswick. PFAS and other hazardous substances can reach drinking water through firefighting foam, sludge spreading, landfills, plastics manufacturing, and other pathways. Many private well owners do not even test for PFAS and may be unaware of exposure risks.

LD 2115 gives DEP the funding and explicit authority to act quickly and consistently statewide to not only test and monitor private wells (as it did in Brunswick); but also to fund remediation and mitigation. Those statewide capabilities and uniform standards will prevent the uneven, delayed responses that leave families exposed and communities anxious.

Rather than individual Towns trying to reinvent the wheel and develop technical strategies during an emergency, LD 2115 ensures DEP can tap its institutional knowledge and technical expertise and quickly face down emerging threats.

I respectfully ask the committee to vote “ought to pass” on LD 2115 to protect Maine residents when hazardous substances threaten private drinking water. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Christine Foster