

**Testimony of Anonymous PFAS Impacted Farmer read by Sergio Cahueque – Defend Our Health
In SUPPORT of LD 132 “An Act to Require Health Insurance Carriers to Provide Coverage for Blood
testing for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances”**

I have been farming on PFAS impacted land since I was 12 years old. We didn't know it at the time, but the biosolid/sludge products being spread on the land was highly contaminated with PFAS chemicals. This was a DEP approved project, and we were convinced that we were doing a great service for our state and community. I've been helping my family work this land my whole life, and now some of the most productive land in the state is unusable. The well is contaminated to a level of over 8,000 parts per trillion. I've been on this land for almost 35 years now, one can only imagine how much of that water I've drunk over all that time.

I found out that my dairy herd and farm soil were contaminated last winter. My family has spent over a year cleaning up our herd to resume milk production. All the time there is the lingering question of what the long term effects of this exposure will be. What will the effects on my children be. We have a family history of digestive issues and I struggle with that too. I know that there are intestinal diseases that are linked to these chemicals. I also lost a close family member to a rare form of cancer. Knowing what we know now begs the question – is there a link there?

I also have PFAS exposure outside my farm work, as do many other citizens. I can try to avoid more PFAS now, but there's no taking back what I've taken in over so many years. The thing I need at this point is help heading off any diseases that might crop up because of these chemicals. It's going to be better for me and cheaper for my insurance company if I can get the blood serum test now and start regular screening for the linked diseases. If you're going to get sick you want to find out early so you can deal with it before there's no hope of recovery.

I have a high deductible insurance plan, and as much as I want to know what my exposure is, I can't afford to pay \$450 or \$600 for this test. Especially for my entire family. But this should be no different than any other regular screening. I just turned forty-five and had to go in for my first colonoscopy. If you're at an age where you're at risk of colon cancer, you get checked up and insurance covers the cost. I have a known chemical exposure that puts me at risk for a bunch of specific illnesses. I know it. The state of Maine knows it. But I need to document my blood levels so my doctor can start screening me. It should be simple. It's a step in the right direction for our state.

I urge you to unanimously pass LD 132. Thank you for your time.