

Testimony of Lani Graham, MD, MPH

In Support of LD 1537

An Act to Amend the Laws Relating to the Prevention of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Pollution and to Provide Additional Funding

Sponsored by Senator Henry Ingwersen

And In Opposition to LD 1214

An Act to Clarify the Laws to Combat Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination

Sponsored by Senator Joseph Baldacci

Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, April 26, 2023

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and Members of the Committee, my name is Lani Graham I am a former Chief Public health Officer for Maine. I serve on the Public Health Committee of the Maine Medical Association. I live in Freeport. I am here in Support of LD 1537 and in Opposition to LD 1214.

First, I am pleased to be before you so soon after earth day in support of LD 1537. Actions related to stopping the pollution of planet is just what was envisioned by Earth Day and exactly what this bill does. Tragically the very large chemical family known as PFAS, was carelessly allowed to contaminate Maine land, water, food, and people for decades. But thanks to hard work of many, including this body, Maine leads the nation in taking action. This bill is modest and generous, perhaps too generous, in allowing users of these chemicals lengthy periods to proceed with the essential phasing out process. We cannot hesitate now just as we are making real progress. While testing water, food, fish, and animals is a reasonable way to protect human health, that does not address the real problem, which is on-going contamination. Stopping the spread of contaminated waste on Maine land is a start, but if these chemicals continue to enter our waste stream, the danger and pollution continues. We must stop the contamination at its source, which is what LD 1537 addresses, while at the same time recognizing that use

elimination will not be easy or immediate. In the interest of making things easier for small business this bill offers an exception on PFAS reporting requirements, keeping the focus where it needs to be on large manufacturers.

Unfortunately, LD 1214 takes a much more relaxed approach to stopping PFAS contamination of Maine. All the changes in this bill lean in the direction of greater and longer contamination with this highly toxic family of chemicals. Should this law be endorsed, the new definition proposed for PFAS in this legislation would severely limit Maine's ability to track and reduce sources, as it leaves out thousands of family members included in the original definition. Possibly worst of all, manufacturers are given a free pass to continue using this family of chemicals even beyond 2030, regardless of whether the use of the contaminate is unavoidable.

I hope you will unanimously support LD 1537 and unanimously reject LD 1214.

Thank you for your attention. I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.