

Testimony of Adam Nordell, Defend Our Health, Portland, ME
In SUPPORT of LD 1488, 'An Act to Expand Testing for Perfluoroalkyl & Polyfluoroalkyl Substances to
Private Drinking Water Wells'
Before the Health and Human Services Committee
April 28th, 2023

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Adam Nordell. I am a campaign manager for Defend Our Health and a PFAS impacted farmer. Please accept this testimony in support of LD 1214, which would help protect renters and home buyers from PFAS exposure.

PFAS exposure has been linked with a host of troubling illnesses including cancers, autoimmune disorders and diseases of the thyroid and liver. Once inside the human body, the chemicals can linger for decades. PFAS contaminated wells have been identified across the state of Maine, suggesting a long term health risk to well owners, farmers and farm adjacent communities and school children. Many of these wells have been discovered in connection with Maine DEP's ongoing sludge investigation. Many others show no connection to historic sludge spreading records. These wells may be contaminated by the nearby use of sludge-based compost sold by Casella Waste Systems, AFFF fire-fighting foam or perhaps the use of the many PFAS-laden consumer products currently not tracked by Maine DEP. Troublingly, some property owners on DEP's highest concern 'tier one' sludge sites have denied access to the State's sludge investigation, potentially leaving anyone who uses the groundwater wells onsite vulnerable to these chemicals

My family and many of my farmer friends and rural neighbors have been heavily impacted by PFAS exposure. Our businesses have been shut down or seriously disrupted and our health has been put in jeopardy. It's a trauma to my community that is difficult to describe. And yet we are lucky to have assistance from the state. Importantly, our well water has been filtered to protect our families going forward. But thousands of Mainers remain at risk and outside of the reach of DEP's sludge investigation, because their contamination may stem from Casella's commercially composted sludge instead of the sludge land application program. Many Mainers who rent their homes are even further at risk, because they don't have the authority to get a well water test from DEP. Many of these renters may not be able to afford the \$300 cost of the test.

I have a friend whose landlords failed to disclose the known, toxic levels of arsenic in her water leaving her health deeply impacted. I have another friend who lives near a severely impacted sludge spreading site, and whose repeated requests that her landlord test her drinking water well have been ignored. It's not hard to imagine the financial disincentives for landlords to uncover a contamination issue on their rental properties. And yet the health of thousands of Mainers is at stake. Fortunately, we now have a landlord disclosure law for arsenic and other contaminants. It's time to add PFAS to that list.

I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1488. Thank you for your time,

Adam Nordell
Defend Our Health