



Solutions for a  
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Director of Advocacy, Defend Our Health  
In SUPPORT of the Change Package for LD 258, "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and  
Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government  
and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State  
Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025"  
Before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee  
May 17, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the director of advocacy for Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health works to make sure everyone has equal access to safe food, safe drinking water, healthy homes and toxic-free, climate-friendly products. I am here to testify in support to the change package for LD 258, "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024, and June 30, 2025".

LD 258 includes funding for the Department of Environmental Protection's water quality program for drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities. We ask that you support this funding request. Drinking water systems and wastewater treatment facilities have been on the frontlines dealing with the issue of PFAS contamination. Many have had to upgrade systems or install filters to treat for PFAS contamination. This funding, which has matching federal funds, will help our drinking water and wastewater systems to continue to provide necessary services for our communities. In addition, there is also funding under the Health and Human services drinking water program for additional drinking water and wastewater treatment. We also urge you to support this funding.

As previously mentioned when we testified before this committee earlier this session, the state has devoted considerable resources to the issue of PFAS contamination and we are grateful to the legislature and the Governor for supporting this funding. And while we are heartened to see more resources being directed to this issue across departments, it is sadly not enough. Particularly as we look at the issue of source reduction. Maine passed a first in the world piece of legislation that will phase out all non-essential uses of PFAS in the state by 2030. Source reduction is the single most important thing we can do to combat further contamination. Yet, the safer chemicals program under the Department of Environmental Protection is woefully understaffed. We were disappointed to see that there was not additional funding in the change package for the Safer Chemicals program. There are currently 2 staff people assigned to program to implement a massive source reduction program that impacts industry across the globe. We urge the committee to fully fund the drinking water and wastewater programs under DEP and HHS as previously mentioned but we would also encourage the committee to utilize any additional funding available for additional staff for the DEP's safer chemicals program to assure that PFAS source reduction programs are implemented correctly and in a timely manner to help prevent further contamination across the state. Thank you.