



Solutions for a  
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

**Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health  
In Opposition of LD 1960 "An Act to Support Farming in Maine by Extending the Deadline for  
Manufacturers of Products Containing Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances to Report  
on Those Products"**

**Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
March 18, 2024**

Hello Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health's mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes, and products that are toxic-free and climate friendly. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 1960 "An Act to Support Farming in Maine by Extending the Deadline for Manufacturers of Products Containing Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances to Report on Those Products".

LD 1960 would gut Maine's landmark PFAS in pesticides policy, which is one of the strongest in the nation. This is yet another attempt by industry and chemical manufacturers to weaken Maine's PFAS laws and allow toxic PFAS to continue poison of our land and water. This is particularly concerning since those that have been most impacted by the PFAS crisis here in Maine have been our farmers. To allow continued poisoning of our farmland is beyond the pale.

This committee has heard a lot from industry over the past few months about the supposed impacts on their business and their continued complaints about a law that is in place to protect public health. What has been lost in this conversation of exemptions and reporting is the actual voice of the impacted communities. We keep hearing about the burden on business. What about our farmers? They are businesses, they account for \$26B in income for the state, and they are the ones that are hardest hit. This includes the first farmer impacted, Fred Stone, of Stoneridge Farm, who has lost his livelihood and is battling health issues because of this PFAS contamination. This includes Songbird Farm, owned by Adam Nordell and Johanna Davis, which has had to be shut down because of this contamination. Adam and his family forced off the land because of the high levels of PFAS, and now having to live in constant fear of the health impacts on themselves and their five-year-old son. Surely, we want to do everything we can to prevent this from happening to other families, not make it easier to contaminate more of our valuable and diminishing farmland. Surely their lives are more important than a few extra bucks in the pockets of a multibillion-dollar corporation.

All Mainers are dealing with the impact of this contamination. Maine taxpayers are seeing their sewer district bills rise because of the cost of landfilling sludge due to PFAS contamination. Wastewater districts are stuck in the middle, dealing with an issue they didn't cause. The state



of Maine has spent over \$200M<sup>1</sup> and counting to manage this issue. Maine taxpayers are on the hook while those that cause this issue to continue to ask for exemptions from a law that is meant to prevent further contamination. It's unconscionable.

We have over 70 farms and over 600 residential wells in the state of Maine that are dealing with some level of PFAS contamination through no fault of their own. It is time for those that utilize PFAS in their products to have to shoulder some of the responsibility by complying with Maine's current PFAS in pesticides law. If we don't start to force companies to move away from utilizing this toxic chemical, we are going to see more farms shut down, more lives destroyed, more families with health impacts, and more money spent by Maine taxpayers to clean up a mess they didn't make. Therefore, Defend urges the committee to vote "ought not to pass" on LD 1960.

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<sup>1</sup> Schauffler, M. (2023, May 9). *The price of Pfas: "Forever Chemicals" generate boundless costs*. The Maine Monitor. <https://themainemonitor.org/the-price-of-pfas-forever-chemicals-generate-boundless-costs/>