

Testimony in Support of LD 400, LD 222, and LD 407
Advocating for Environmental Safety and Public Health

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Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources

Maine Legislature

Distinguished members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and Chairperson Doudera.

My name is Amy Self, I live on Coombs Road in Brunswick, ME. I am an impacted community member and a member of Brunswick United for a Safe Environment. I am here today to express my unwavering support for three crucial bills that aim to address the pressing environmental and public health challenges posed by Aqueous Film-Forming Foam (AFFF).

I am compelled to testify in person to provide this committee with a real-life impact statement from a victim of the AFFF chemical disaster that occurred at the Brunswick Airport managed by Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRRA) in August 2024. I am referring to the worst chemical disaster in Maine's history and the 6th worst chemical disaster in the country.

We have lived in Brunswick on a road near the former Naval Air Station for 30 years. Prior to August 2024, my family and I were able to use the private well that supplies water to our home without fear or concern. Our well had been tested by the Navy and DEP several times prior to August including testing for PFAS and other chemicals of concern. Those test results revealed a pristine and safe well. We could drink, cook and bathe using the water from our well without fear or concern.

In September, one month after the disaster, the DEP conducted testing of wells for PFAS chemicals in our neighborhood. Our well test results were over 2 times the EPA's standard for safe water. The results were shocking and instilled fear and anxiety. In depth research on the seriously hazardous and life-threatening impacts of ingesting PFAS/PFOS laden water or exposing skin to even trace amounts of PFAS, magnified the high levels of shock, fear, anxiety and stress.

The test result of this magnitude changed how we lived and functioned day to day. Our well was destroyed, poisoned. Now what?

Compounding all this was the fact there was nowhere to turn. No one was going to help. No one . Inquiries led to finger pointing and silence or carefully worded letters stating words to the effect, we take this matter very seriously, but we are not responsible and there is nothing we will do for you.

Our well was destroyed through no fault of our own and there was nothing anyone was going to do to assist us.

We had to stop using our water immediately and purchase water for drinking and cooking and took our laundry to a laundry mat. Showering and bathing was an exercise in anxiety and stress. Every

time we exposed our skin to the shower we wondered, what are we exposing ourselves to? What will be the health consequences of this? We lived like we were camping, no reliable hygiene and no safe running water. We ate premade meals rather than run the risk of PFAS exposure.

Over the following months, we wrote to countless agencies, attended Brunswick Town Council Meetings, MRRRA Board meetings explained our test results and asked for help not only for ourselves but for the community. There were others in the same situation. If there was a response, it was polite, but generally we were dismissed.

The Town of Brunswick was overwhelmed by this preventable chemical disaster and understandably not prepared to deal with the aftermath.

The days turned into months without any response or water. It became more clear as we met dead end after dead end no one was going to help. We were on our own. Victims whose destroyed property was no one's concern or responsibility. We were collateral damage in the pursuit of the almighty dollar.

The second round of PFAS well test results were conducted by the Maine DEP in December 2024. Our results came back as improved, however 2 other wells on our road tested at or above 20ppt. Five times the EPA's standard for safe water. One of those wells is 300 feet from ours.

With nowhere to turn, no support and no end to the AFFF/PFAS nightmare in sight, we were forced to find a solution and pay for it ourselves.

Retrofitting an established home that sits almost entirely on ledge to hook up to town water is not a project I recommend to any home owner unless it is an emergency. This was an emergency.

We pulled from our retirement to pay for the town water hook up. The grand total was \$35,361.14.

We approached the town and MRRRA, asked who we should submit this bill to. There was no response. We were again dismissed.

It is unacceptable that we continue to be victimized. We are not alone. There are families on our road and Princes Point who are in the exact same situation. Their wells are destroyed, and they are on their own. And not everyone can afford to spend 35 thousand dollars to ensure that they have access to clean drinking water

Which is why I urge you to pass all three essential bills. LD 407, which calls for the removal of all AFFF from Brunswick Landing by 2026. LD 400, which mandates an inventory and reporting requirement for AFFF; and LD 222, which establishes an AFFF Take-Back Program; These three legislative measures are essential to safeguarding our environment and protecting the health and well-being of our communities.

Support for LD 407: Brunswick Landing Cleanup by 2026

LD 407 is a critical bill that mandates the removal of all remaining AFFF from the Brunswick Landing by 2026. The catastrophic AFFF disaster of August 2024 occurred on Brunswick Landing at the airport property managed by Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRRA). To date MRRRA has not taken any action to ensure the remaining AFFF is removed from the property. This bill was

introduced in part due to MRRRA's continued lack of response to the irreversible damage done to waterways, private wells, fisheries, clam flats, businesses, the environment, the community, ecosystems and property values.

Ecological balance will never be restored to the environment. The August 2024 disaster released toxic forever chemicals, and the catastrophic impacts cannot be reversed. It is too late for MRRRA to take prompt and responsible action. A vote for this bill is essential because Brunswick Landing is a Superfund /CERCLA site. The fact that MRRRA has done nothing to remove the AFFF in the over six months since the disaster is unacceptable. A vote for this bill will demonstrate support for the impacted community and those whose property has been irrevocably damaged by guaranteeing MRRRA is required to act responsibly and force the removal of all AFFF from the property. A vote for this bill will ensure its objectives are supported. They include:

- **Remediation:** The cleanup will remove AFFF contaminants from the site, preventing further chemical disasters which are currently imminent.
- **Environmentally responsible revitalization:** A clean and safe Brunswick Landing may improve the property values of the private residences and neighborhoods outside the perimeter of Brunswick Landing whose wells were destroyed by PFAS/PFOS contamination after the Chemical Disaster of August 2024. Removing the AFFF threat may help re-attract investment and development, something the chemical disaster may have negatively impacted, as well as hopefully boost the local economy and property values and improve the quality of life for residents.
- **Compliance:** By adhering to the 2026 deadline, you will send a message to quasi- state entities like MRRRA and other businesses that Maine is dedicated to ensuring they act in an environmentally responsible way and comply with all environmental regulations.

In essence, LD 407 is a decisive step towards preventing another chemical disaster under MRRRA management and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Brunswick.

Support for LD 400: AFFF Inventory and Reporting Requirement

LD 400 is a vital step in understanding the extent of AFFF usage and its potential impact on our environment. This bill requires entities that possess AFFF to maintain an inventory and report their holdings to the state. By voting for this bill you can:

- **Ensure Transparency:** This bill will provide a comprehensive overview of AFFF usage, allowing us to track its distribution and identify areas where it poses the greatest risk.
- **Facilitate Regulation:** With accurate data, regulatory bodies can develop targeted strategies to mitigate the environmental and health hazards associated with AFFF.
- **Promote Accountability:** Entities will be held accountable for their AFFF stockpiles, encouraging responsible management and disposal practices.

LD 400 is a foundational bill that will equip us with the necessary information to make informed decisions about AFFF management.

Support for LD 222: AFFF Take-Back Program

LD 222 introduces a proactive approach to dealing with AFFF by establishing a Take-Back Program. This program will facilitate the safe collection and proper disposal of AFFF, preventing its harmful effects on our environment. A vote for this bill will send the message this Committee embraces the benefits of this program which include:

- **Environmental Protection:** By safely collecting and disposing of AFFF, we can prevent its release into the environment, reducing the risk of further water, soil and air contamination.
- **Public Health:** Removing AFFF from circulation minimizes the potential for human exposure to harmful chemicals, safeguarding the health of our residents.
- **Community Engagement:** The Take-Back Program will encourage community involvement and awareness, fostering a culture of environmental stewardship.

LD 222 is a forward-thinking bill that addresses the AFFF issue at its source, ensuring a safer and healthier environment for future generations.

In summary, LD 407, LD 400 and LD 222, are indispensable bills that address the multifaceted challenges posed by AFFF. By supporting these legislative measures, you take steps toward ensuring that horrific spill that happened in Brunswick doesn't happen again and affirm your commitment to environmental protection, public health, and community well-being. I urge the members of the state legislature to pass these bills and take decisive action towards a cleaner, safer, and healthier future for all.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Amy Self,

Brunswick, ME