



Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
% Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

January 27, 2025

RE: LD 222: An Act to Establish a Take-back and Disposal Program for Firefighting and Fire-suppressing Foam to Which Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Have Been Added, LD 407: An Act to Prohibit the Use of Aqueous Film-forming Foam at the Former Brunswick Naval Air Station, & LD 400: Resolve, Directing the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal to Compile a Statewide Inventory of Aqueous Film-forming Foam Concentrate

Dear Sen. Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of the ENR Committee:

My name is Ania Wright and I am Maine Audubon's Policy Advocate. Maine Audubon is a wildlife conservation non-profit – we fulfill our mission to “conserve Maine wildlife and wildlife habitat” by engaging people of all ages in nature through a science-based approach to education, conservation, and advocacy. On behalf of Maine Audubon and our 30,000 members, supporters, and volunteers, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 222, LD 400, and LD 407 regarding Aqueous Film-forming Foam (AFFF), which contains toxic PFAS (perfluorinated and polyfluorinated substances).

Last August, Brunswick Landing and the surrounding area saw 1,450 gallons of toxic AFFF concentrate mixed with 50,000 gallons of water spill due to a faulty fire suppression system. This spill was the 6th largest toxic foam spill in the nation's history, and the largest ever for Maine. These “forever chemicals” have since spread through waterways and sewage systems that discharge into the Androscoggin River, and will continue to threaten ecosystems, wildlife, and people. The potential impacts are still being investigated, but we know that exposure to these chemicals are linked to a myriad of health impacts in humans, and similar impacts are increasingly being identified in wildlife. The spill in Brunswick will likely lead to decreased brood sizes and reproductive issues in local bird populations, altered growth in amphibians, liver and immune system damage to small mammals, and more.¹

Providing opportunities for funding and resources to allow for the safe removal and disposal of AFFF is thus critical to protecting Maine people and the environment from future spills, and these three bills

¹ Andrews, et al. (2023). “Discussion. Has the human population become a sentinel for the adverse effects of PFAS contamination on wildlife health and endangered species?”

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0048969723045643?via%3Dihub>

will all help to reach that goal. LD 407 will mitigate any immediate risk of further spills at the Brunswick Landing. LD 400 will enable us to gather information and prioritize collection, since we do not currently have data on the estimated 50,000 gallons of AFFF still being stored in Maine. Finally, LD 222 will develop a take-back and disposal program that will lessen the burden on communities to get rid of these dangerous chemicals, and will prevent future spills. Together, we believe that these three bills will protect both the Town of Brunswick and Maine communities, wildlife, and ecosystems across the state from future disasters.

AFFF has exacerbated Maine's PFAS crisis, and without the passage of these bills, it could happen again. **We encourage the committee to support LDs 222, 400, and 407 in order to protect Maine people, our environment, and wildlife from future environmental disaster.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Policy Advocate