



Solutions for a  
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

**Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health  
In SUPPORT of LD 210, "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, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"  
Before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee  
February 27, 2025**

Senator Rotundo, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Gattine, Representative Pluecker and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President of Policy and 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 LD 210, "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, 2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"

LD 210 includes funding on page A-69 for two new positions under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF):

- One Management Analyst II position to support the PFAS Fund and provides funding for related All Other costs. Description: The PFAS Fund is responsible for administering \$65 million and needs a staff member dedicated to financial administration. This position will be responsible for assisting with the development and management of administrative policies, procedures, and programs supporting the PFAS Fund's four program areas: financial support to impacted producers, land acquisition and management, research, and health initiatives. It will assist with evaluating, executing, and adapting PFAS-related programs requiring administrative, financial, contractual, and information management review.
- One limited-period Public Service Coordinator I position previously continued by Financial Order 03626 F5 through June 19, 2027. This initiative also provides funding for related All Other costs. Description: This current position began work in May 2024 with USDA funding to manage the administration of ~\$11M in critical PFAS research funding (e.g., oversee the process of granting research funds, manage scientific communications, and establish a research station). The research projects are expected to endure through at least FY29, and the research station is expected to be a permanent facility.

These positions will be used to help support the important work of the PFAS Fund under the DACF. Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS are a man-made class of so-



called "forever chemicals" which don't break down and remain in our body and in the environment for years. These chemicals are hazardous to human health and the environment. In 2022 there was \$60M appropriated in the budget to help farmers who are impacted by PFAS contamination. These funds provide income replacement, funding for farm buybacks, research, and medical monitoring. These two positions will help to make sure that the PFAS Fund and programs are implemented correctly, supporting Maine farmers.

We urge the committee to support these two positions under DACF's budget. And, while working with PFAS impacted farmers is the main focus of our work with the DACF, we would also just like to say that we are in support of the DACF getting more staff in general. We have worked with several DACF staffers over the years, and they do great work, but they need additional help. Maine has been a leader when it comes to helping farmers impacted by PFAS contamination. In order to continue that great work, we need a department that is fully staffed. And those staff people should be paid a living wage. We recognize the budget is tight but there are options available to increase revenue streams, including making sure that the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share. We urge the committee to support these and other positions in the DACF budget by voting "ought to pass" on LD 210.

Thank you for your time