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Testimony of Representative Paul Flynn, District 63. Albion, ME

**In SUPPORT of LD 582**

**An Act to Require Health Insurance Carriers to Provide Coverage for Blood Testing for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances**

Before the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee  
March 4th, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. My name is Paul Flynn, and I represent house district 63 which includes Freedom, Unity Township, a portion of Winslow and my hometown of Albion. Please accept this testimony in support of LD 582, which would clarify that insurance companies must cover the cost of the PFAS blood serum bill as an Essential Health Benefit addressing preventative care and chronic disease management.

From 1999-2015 My wife and I owned and operated Freedom General Store in Freedom and I currently serve as the pastor of the Freedom Congregational Church. In these roles, I have worked to support the wellbeing of my rural neighbors and know my community well. I remember a man named Tim Christensen who lived nearby and used to visit me at the store. He ran an organic vegetable farm but had to close his business in 2014 after he received a terminal pancreatic cancer diagnosis. Now, years after his death, we understand that his farm was spread with sludge prior to his owning it. His well and his farm soil were severely contaminated with PFAS. In 2014, Maine didn't make the connection between sludge and PFAS so Tim didn't have the ability to test his blood for PFAS. Since he couldn't test his blood, his doctors didn't know that his health was being compromised by a twenty-year carcinogenic exposure.

Maine's PFAS crisis has had profound impacts on my district. The chemicals have contaminated at least six farms in my district, with soils testing as high as 493 parts per billion for the chemical PFOS. That is about 75 times higher than the level at which chemicals can unsafely contaminate milk on a dairy farm where the cows eat hay.

The chemicals have contaminated fish and game resources to the extent that the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife recently issued two Do-Not-Eat advisories for wild turkey and venison harvested in sections of my district, and Maine CDC issued a limited consumption advisory for a trout stream in my town of Albion. I have constituents who enjoy a self sustaining lifestyle with hunting a large part of their annual food gathering. This advisory alone has caused hunters that normally would travel to our area during hunting season to go elsewhere in pursuit of game. The amount of business that we did at the Freedom General Store, during the November hunting season literally paid for the lean winter months of January and February.

The chemicals have contaminated our drinking water wells. I literally live in a Horseshoe surrounded by PFAS contaminants. According to recent data from the Department of Environmental Protection, at least 29 households in my rural district have PFAS levels above Maine's interim drinking water standard, which is 20 parts per trillion. In fact, the second worst contaminated well in the whole state is in my district, which contains an astonishing 133,000 parts per trillion for the sum of Maine's regulated PFAS.

We're aware of the chemicals now, but people in Albion, Freedom, Unity Township and Winslow have been working on those farms, eating that wild caught fish and game, and drinking that water for generations. Now they are living with the health impacts of their exposure to these known carcinogens.

Eastern Kennebec and Western Waldo counties have many low-income people who can't afford the \$450-\$600 cost of this test. LD 582 simply clarifies that the PFAS blood serum test is preventative health care – an important screening tool like a mammogram or a colonoscopy. While I am not a proponent of mandates we have a very serious problem and until some type of longer term solution can be realized it is critical that testing be made available for all.

I ask that you join me in supporting the health, life saving health, of those affected in our rural areas.

I strongly encourage you to vote unanimously "Ought to Pass" on LD 582

Thank you for your time,

Representative Paul Flynn,  
district 63, Albion, ME