



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony in opposition to LD451, *An Act to Require Testing of Solar and Wind Energy Developments for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination*

March 4, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and distinguished member of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Cathy Breen. I am the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters (MCV), a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters that is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I'm speaking in opposition to LD451, *An Act to Require Testing of Solar and Wind Energy Developments for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination*. MCV's opposition to this bill rests on two fundamental values that we hold dear: 1) our commitment to public health that results from clean soil and clean water; and 2) our commitment to tackling the climate crisis before us.

First, as many of you surely know, Maine has been on the leading edge of managing the contamination from harmful "forever chemicals" like Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl, also known as PFAS and PFOS. These chemicals are known to compromise the effectiveness of vaccines,¹ increase the risk of certain types of cancers, and increase the risk of preeclampsia and high blood pressure during human pregnancy,² among other conditions. These chemicals can be found in a variety of settings and products, including but not limited to fire fighting foam, food packaging, furniture, biosolids (like sewage sludge once used widely for fertilizer), drinking water, food, soils near solid waste sites, residential cleaning products, and so on. Maine Conservation Voters takes the issue of PFAS and PFOS contamination very seriously, as it has real impacts for public health in the State of Maine.

Over the past few sessions, the Maine Legislature has developed policies to detect and limit exposure to PFAS and PFOS in a variety of products, soils and water. For example, in 2021, Maine passed LD1503, which aims to reduce the use of these chemicals in Maine over time. In 2023, the Legislature amended this law, refining the definitions and exemptions under the previous legislation. In addition, the Legislature appropriated \$60 million from the General Fund in 2022 to help Maine farmers test and remediate agricultural properties that contain high levels

¹ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40572-024-00441-y>

² <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas>

of PFAS and PFOS. MCV supported all of these measures because we have always fought for clean water and land.

Second, another core goal of MCV is to tackle the climate crisis caused by the emissions of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels.³ To that end, we have supported the proliferation of renewable energy infrastructure in Maine like rooftop solar power, larger scale community solar projects, and the research and development of floating off-shore wind. We have also supported efforts like LD1 to make Maine houses, buildings, roads and communities more resilient in the face of growing storm severity and damage.

Our commitment to both clean water and soils and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy development forms the foundation of our objection to LD451. This bill singles out one type of product in Maine, and it directs the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to undertake extensive testing for no obvious environmental reason. **According to Michigan State University, solar panels rarely contain PFAS or PFOS, nor do they leach such chemicals into surrounding soils.**⁴ Furthermore, **Maine DEP is already developing a system to safely monitor and dispose of products that may contain intentionally added PFAS and PFOS, and solar panels are subject to this requirement.**⁵ The testing regime suggested in this bill would waste limited resources for no particular gain. For these reasons, I encourage you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD451.

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

³ <https://www.maineconservation.org/priorities/climate-change/>

⁴ <https://graham.umich.edu/media/pubs/Facts-about-solar-panels--PFAS-contamination-47485.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/>