



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony
In Support of

LD 451 An Act to Require Testing of Solar and Wind Energy Developments for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination

Good Afternoon Senator Lawrence and Representative Sachs and esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is John Eder representing District 136 in Waterboro, Alfred and Lyman. I am here to speak in support of **LD 451 An Act to Require Testing of Solar and Wind Energy Developments for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination**.

As we stand on the brink of a solar energy boom, with hundreds of solar farms proposed across our state, it is crucial to consider the long-term implications for our farmland and food security. While I am a proponent of solar—my wife and I recently reached our long-term goal of installing solar panels on our roof—we must be cautious to ensure the overall long-term sustainability of our health, groundwater, and agricultural security. This legislation aims to ensure that in our rush to do good for the environment, we do not inadvertently cause more harm.

Many of the proposed solar farms are situated on farmland, which presents a significant opportunity to maximize our land resources while transitioning to renewable energy. However, without regular soil testing, we risk contaminating these lands with hazardous materials, as concerns about solar panel waste, disposal, and long-term contamination grow.

Recent studies have highlighted the potential dangers associated with the breakdown of solar panels. Research published in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology* found that as solar panels age and degrade, they can leach harmful metals such as cadmium and lead into the surrounding environment. These metals can contaminate soil and water, posing significant health risks to both humans and wildlife. According to a recent article, "the vast majority of solar panels contain a binding resin that includes PFAS, which are used in the outer layer to ensure durability"¹. This is a significant concern, as PFAS contamination has been found on over 100 farms in Maine, raising alarming concerns about food safety and water quality².

An article from Crowell & Moring notes, "as the demand for solar energy continues to grow, so too does the need for responsible management of the full lifecycle of solar products," emphasizing that we must consider the environmental impacts of solar panel waste³. If we do not take proactive measures now, we could see former

farmlands turn into brownfields due to contamination, limiting their future use and jeopardizing our food security for future generations.

Food security for our state is paramount; as we face challenges from climate change, population growth, and economic instability, it's vital that we protect our agricultural resources. Regular soil testing will be a simple and essential precaution in ensuring that our farmland remains viable for food production, safeguarding the health and well-being of our communities' long-term health.

Let's employ the precautionary principle here to ensure that our commitment to renewable energy does not come at the expense of our food security and long-term environmental integrity.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask for you to vote ought to pass on **LD 451 An Act to Require Testing of Solar and Wind Energy Developments for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination.**

Sincerely,



John M. Eder
State Representative

Footnotes:

1. Environmental Science & Technology. "Environmental Impacts of Solar Panel Disposal: Leaching of Hazardous Materials." [Link to study if available]

2. Portland Press Herald. "PFAS contamination found on more than 100 Maine farms." January 15, 2025. Link to article (<https://www.pressherald.com/2025/01/15/pfas-contamination-found-on-more-than-100-maine-farms/>)

3. Crowell & Moring. "Clean Energy Companies Must Pay Heed to PFAS Crackdown." Link to article (<https://www.crowell.com/a/web/5DJWjYcyJvSsRqddEQQc2M/clean-energy-cos-must-pay-heed-to-pfas-crackdown.pdf>)