



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: Maine Relay 711

Lori K. Gramlich

Assistant House Majority Leader

(207) 287-1430

Lori.Gramlich@legislature.maine.gov

March 17, 2025

Testimony of Rep. Lori K. Gramlich in opposition to
**LD 827, An Act to Allow the Sale of Polymer-coated Cookware That Is
Authorized for Food Contact by the United States Food and Drug
Administration, and**
**LD 987, An Act Clarifying Exemptions from the Notification Requirements
for Products Containing PFAS**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and my distinguished colleagues of the Joint Select Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Lori Gramlich, and I proudly represent the lovely seaside community of Old Orchard Beach, House District 131.

I am here to testify in opposition to both LD 827, An Act to Allow the Sale of Polymer-coated Cookware That Is Authorized for Food Contact by the United States Food and Drug Administration, and LD 987, An Act Clarifying Exemptions from the Notification Requirements for Products Containing PFAS.

As many of you returning to this committee will recall, in 2021, Maine passed LD 1503, An Act to An Act To Stop Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Pollution - the first-in-the-world, landmark PFAS products law. I was honored to be the lead sponsor of that legislation and many other pieces of legislation to protect the health and environment of all Mainers from further PFAS contamination. Maine has been a leader on the issue of PFAS source reduction, with other states and some Canadian provinces interested in replicating this landmark legislation.

Sadly, LD 827 and LD 987 would allow more PFAS into our state, impacting public health and the environment. It is unnecessary and harmful.

Proponents argue that because the chemicals listed in LD 827 in cookware are approved by the FDA, we can assume that they are safe. We know that this assumption is not necessarily accurate.

There are many chemicals which are approved for food contact that have known adverse health implications - chemicals that the FDA still allows in food contact materials. We have seen, through the work of this committee, both in the 131st and 130th Legislatures, that we cannot wait for the FDA. Maine has been a leader in this regard, banning PFAS in food packaging long before the FDA took any action. Even now, the phase-out of PFAS from food packaging is considered “voluntary” by the FDA. Maine also banned phthalates as a class in food packaging in 2019 because of its health impacts, particularly on children. The FDA still allows several phthalates to be used in food packaging. There is example after example of the FDA being far behind the states and the European Union when it comes to phasing out dangerous toxics from products.

The cookware industry states that their products are safe under “normal conditions.” Pans and other cookware can only be used^[1] on low to medium heat, cannot be washed with abrasive cleaners and cannot come in contact with steel utensils. Most consumers do not follow these guidelines. How many of you have Teflon pans at home that are scratched or chipped? I used to, but after all I learned during my first session serving on this committee, I now only use cast iron. We have all seen cookware in that condition, and that flaking and chipping releases dangerous chemicals. In fact, even “normal use” of Teflon use can kill pet birds^[2]. Normal heating of PTFE (Teflon) pans releases toxics in the air that are lethal to birds. This clearly demonstrates that there are in fact mobile, bioactive toxic releases from these types of pans.

LD 987 asks for several exemptions that are unnecessary and would circumvent the rulemaking process set up by the DEP under both LD 1503 and LD 1537.

As you may recall, LD 1537 was introduced to amend some components of the reporting requirements outlined in LD 1503, and was passed out of this committee with bipartisan support after an extraordinary amount of work and compromise. Products not specifically identified under LD 1537 as banned have the opportunity under the original law to ask for currently unavoidable use designations from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

LD 987 takes out the requirement that exempt motorized vehicles still phase out PFAS from their textiles and refrigerants. This committee, which, as you know, I was a member of last year, spent hours coming to a compromise that would protect public health and the environment while still allowing industry some leeway on the use of PFAS. One of those compromises was exempting things like cars and boats and farm equipment except for the textiles and refrigerants in those

products because consumers are most likely to come into contact with PFAS in the textiles and refrigerants.

Impacts on public health and the environment should be reduced where possible, and in passing LD 1537, that is just what we did. We should not be having this conversation again.

As the lead sponsor of the original legislation that set up Maine's PFAS products law, I'm very proud of the work that Maine has done on this issue. The PFAS products law was amended last year to make some common sense exemptions from the law for products where we don't have good alternatives yet.

The exemptions outlined in these bills are not common sense exemptions. We do not need Teflon and other PFAS in our cookware. There are many other options out there for cookware, like stainless steel and cast iron. There are also non-stick cookware options that are PFAS-free. We do not need PFAS in turf or in our textiles or refrigerants. They are harmful to our families and to our environment. We worked hard last session to create a law that protects Mainers, and I believe we did a good job. We need to now let the Department do their job and refrain from opening up this law yet again because some in industry don't want to comply.

I sincerely appreciate the thoughtful work I know this committee will undertake regarding these two bills. I respectfully urge you to unanimously vote ought not to pass on LD 827 and LD 987. Thank you and I will do my best to answer any questions you might have.

^[1] DiLonardo, M. J. (2024, July 24). *Is it safe to use scratched nonstick pans? Here's what experts say*. Simply Recipes. <https://www.simplyrecipes.com/is-it-safe-to-use-scratched-nonstick-pans-7480071>

^[2] Chemours.com. (n.d.). *Teflon™ cookware and bird safety | teflon™ pots and pans*. Teflon. <https://www.teflon.com/en/consumers/teflon-coatings-cookware-bakeware/safety/bird-safety>