

Testimony of Mollie Block.

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 Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Maine Legislature, Augusta, ME
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Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for listening to my testimony.

My name is Mollie Block and I am a student at Colby College. I grew up in Maryland and I moved to Maine for school in part because of my love of the outdoors and the natural beauty of this state. I came here to learn about the environment I love so much and how I can protect it. I am inheriting this world and I want to ensure my own and future generations can enjoy the outdoors and good health.

I am testifying in **opposition** to LD 827 and LD 987 because exempting products with PFAS from Maine's sensible law is furthering our global chemical pollution problem and infringing upon the health of Mainers. Maine legislators have already decided to restrict these products containing PFAS and I believe we should uphold this consumer, health and environmentally friendly decision.

This semester I am taking the class *Pollution and Human Health*, a public health and environmental policy class in which I have learned about the multitude of pollutants, including PFAS, now ubiquitous in our environment. We are also learning about the federal and state policies in place which do, or do not, regulate them. I am so grateful to be taking this class in Maine. As a young person learning about widespread toxic pollutants which we are still discovering the harmful impacts of, it can be easy to feel scared about my and the planet's future. However, Maine being the first state in the nation to have regulated PFAS in consumer products makes me feel hopeful. I feel hopeful that even though there is a long way to go to clean up these chemicals, we can stop increasing their presence in the environment.

Fluoropolymers, the chemicals present in non-stick cookware products, are highly toxic. In a 2020 study, scientists found that these chemicals, which are a type of PFAS, pose health risks such as “certain types of cancer... and thyroid disease”, among others (Lohmann et al. 2020). They are also extremely hard to dispose of, furthering the danger of environmental

contamination. The list of exemptions proposed in LD 987 would allow many other pathways for PFAS into Maine, increasing risks of exposure through transportation (such as refrigerants in vehicles) and children's extracurriculars (such as artificial turf where many sports are played).

Maine should not allow more of these harmful chemicals into our state, especially when there are non-toxic alternatives for these products. We don't yet understand all their negative health impacts, or know how to fully contain or clean them, but we do know they pose a risk to our bodies and to our planet.

I'm taking an entire class dedicated to understanding more about pollutants and I still feel like I am only scratching the surface of understanding. Not everybody can, or wants to, take a highly specific class on chemical pollutants. By voting *ought not to pass* on LD 827 and LD 987, this committee can ensure that people in the state are equally protected from PFAS in their daily lives. Voting down these amendments would mean protecting all Mainers from these persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals.

Please vote *ought not to pass* on LD 827 and LD 987. Thank you.