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TESTIMONY OF  
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MANAGEMENT

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

SPEAKING IN OPPOSITION TO L.D 935

RESOLVE, DIRETING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION TO  
REPORT ON AIR AND SOIL CHEMICAL AND METAL LEVELS AND ON SOIL  
TESTING ON SOLAR PANEL FARM SITES

SPONSORED BY REPRESENTATIVE QUINT  
BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON  
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DATE OF HEARING:

MARCH 31, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I am Susanne Miller, Director of the Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management at the Department of Environmental Protection, speaking in opposition to L.D. 935.

LD 935 requires that the Department submit two reports by December 3, 2025. One would be in regard to available information on the levels of chemicals and metals, both airborne and in soil, in the State, including information on any periodic sampling

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performed by the Department; and the second would include soil testing done by the Department on solar panel farm sites in the State, including testing done before installation, testing done after installation and any ongoing testing, and any results of that testing.

The first report as outlined in the proposed bill is a very broad ask. It appears that the bill would require the Department to describe on a statewide basis the kinds of contaminants the Department samples for regardless of site type, and how and when and at what intervals it conducts that sampling. It appears to ask for all air and soil data but does not require any analysis of that data, nor does it specify that it applies to solar farms in particular. The Department does not believe that a report of this nature will be helpful nor is it necessary. Some of the information broadly asked for is already available on the Department's website and organized by program. In addition, the public already has access to specific statewide sampling data by location through the Department's website dedicated to maps and data collection (for example, PFAS data, remediation sites, etc.). While this information is not dedicated to solar farms, information is available by location.

The second report would require that the Department issue a report about soil testing that has been done by the Department on solar panel sites in the State, including testing done before installation, testing done after installation and any ongoing testing, and any results of that testing. Generally speaking there is not a stand-alone program requiring this kind of testing for solar development sites. To obtain the information requested in the proposed bill, Department staff would need to conduct a comprehensive review of records, files, and collected data over multiple programs to connect sampling data to specific solar development sites to determine what types of samples may have taken place in those locations. With over 700 solar sites in Maine, and hundreds of thousands of sampling data points for a variety of contaminants

LD 935 – Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Report on Air and Soil Chemical and Metal Levels and on Soil Testing on Solar Panel Farm Sites

Testimony of: Susanne Miller/ DEP

March 31, 2025

Page 3 of 3

statewide, this would require significant staff time and resources and thus a sizeable fiscal note.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am available to answer questions of the Committee, either now or at work session.