



Solutions for a
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

**Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In Support of LD 25, "An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater
Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects." Before the Joint
Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
April 10, 2025**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, my name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health's mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes, and products that are toxic-free and climate-friendly. I am here to testify in support of LD 25, "An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects."

Maine is dealing with a real waste issue. Due to the necessary ban on the land application of biosolids, or sludge, to protect Maine's vital farmland, our state-owned landfill, Juniper Ridge Landfill (JRL), will eventually run out of space to manage the sludge. The sludge also requires materials added to it to protect the integrity of the landfill. While we have space currently, we need to prepare for the future instead of waiting until the last minute to manage this waste crisis. LD 25 will provide much needed resources to the state to help fund necessary upgrades and facilities to manage this issue.

LD 25 will help fund already proven upgrades such as allowing wastewater treatment plants to install technology such as sludge dryers and digesters. These types of systems can greatly reduce the volume of sludge to be disposed. They also make disposal easier as you're now dealing with a dry product instead of a wet product so you will also need less of other bulky materials for stabilization. Additionally, the less liquid you have, the less leachate you have that will end up being discharged into rivers, streams, and oceans as wastewater effluent, limiting further PFAS contamination to our vital waterways. The funds can also be used to support new technology and pilot programs that can help invest in better ways to manage sludge down the road.

The bottom line is that we need to invest in our wastewater systems. These are systems we all use and all benefit from. Every single legislator in this building has constituents that depend on these systems to keep their communities and the environment safe. This is not an issue we can hope will get better over time without an influx of resources. The time to act is now, before we run into a real crisis that will force us to spend even more money to fix, putting pressure on local taxpayers. LD 25 is necessary for the continued success of our PFAS management, our landfill management, and our waste stream management. I urge this committee to support passage of LD 25 and vote unanimously "ought to pass".