



Solutions for a
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In Support of LD 1111 "An Act to Provide Water Service Infrastructure to Fairfield Residents Affected
by Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances" before the Environment and Natural Resources
Committee
April 14, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy for Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health works to make sure everyone has equal access to safe food, safe drinking water, healthy homes and toxic-free, climate-friendly products. I am here to testify in support of LD 1111 "An Act to Provide Water Service Infrastructure to Fairfield Residents Affected by Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances".

Fairfield is ground zero for PFAS contamination of residential wells. According to the the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) latest report on the soil and and groundwater investigation, 203 of the 491 residential wells tested in Fairfield tested above the state's interim drinking water standard of 20 parts per trillion (PPT) for the sum of six PFAS. If the DEP was testing for the new health protective federal drinking water standards, that number would inevitably be even higher.

The Fairfield community is dealing with this contamination through no fault of their own. This contamination is the result of the state-sponsored program allowing the land application of sludge on farmland. Currently, the state is covering the cost of the testing and remediation for those wells but that is a cost that the state cannot bear indefinitely. The Department has been up front that the money set aside to deal with the PFAS contamination issue is going to run out, sooner rather than later, in 2 and a half to five years depending on various factors. Once that money is gone, those residents will be on the hook to cover the cost of testing and filtration, a cost they shouldn't have to bear.

The cost of extending public water infrastructure to rural or semi-rural areas can be prohibitive. These are costs that individual homeowners simply cannot and should not be expected to pay. LD 1111 will provide one-time funds to the Kennebec water district to allow them to pay for the expansion of the public water system to those dealing with PFAS contaminated residential wells. We recognize that this is a lot of money for the state to pay upfront. However, over time this is the most financially feasible way to make sure that the residents of Fairfield have access to the basic human right of clean drinking water. The state is responsible for the program that allowed the contamination, the state should be responsible for making sure that there is a long-term solution to provide the residents with clean drinking water.

Families affected by PFAS contaminated residential wells are facing an impossible burden. Testing, filtering, and monitoring these private wells is costly. Bottled water is not a long-term solution. The only safe and sustainable path forward is to connect affected homes to municipal water systems that are regularly tested, regulated, and safe. We urge you to vote unanimously "ought to pass" on LD 1111.