



Solutions for a
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In SUPPORT of LD 1326, "An Act to Protect the Drinking Water for Consumers of Certain Water
Systems by Establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels for Certain Perfluoroalkyl and
Polyfluoroalkyl Substances"
Before the Health and Human Services Committee
April 22, 2025

Good Morning Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services 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 1326, "An Act to Protect the Drinking Water for Consumers of Certain Water Systems by Establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels for Certain Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances".

These so-called "forever chemicals" are toxic and do not belong in drinking water. They have been linked to interference with normal brain development in children, they can increase the risk of some cancers, may lower a woman's chance of getting pregnant, and have been associated with liver problems and increased cholesterol levels.

Maine has been a leader to address the issue of PFAS contamination across the state. We were one of the first states to put into place interim drinking water standards for six PFAS and, at the time, it was one of the most health protective standards for PFAS in drinking water. Since that law was passed in 2021, we have learned so much more about the impacts of PFAS contamination on our health and our environment and that interim drinking water standard is not strong enough to protect the health of Mainers.

In 2024, the U.S. EPA released its final rule setting standards for six PFAS in drinking water. The rule was based on years of work and scientific research about the health impacts of specific PFAS in drinking water¹. It is the strongest health protective standard for PFAS in drinking water. So, if it's going to be federal law, why enshrine it in Maine statute? I think it helps to have this enshrined in state law. It shows that Maine takes these regulations seriously. Additionally, if these standards were to be weakened at the federal level, Mainers are still protected. The EPA is being sued by some water districts and has asked for additional time to respond to those

¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2024, April 26). *PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation*. Federal Register . <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/26/2024-07773/pfas-national-primary-drinking-water-regulation>



lawsuits. We are concerned that the Administration will either weaken or completely walk back the standards in response to the lawsuits. If that happens, having the standards in Maine statute will still allow Maine to move forward to protect our drinking water.

We understand the Department is opposing this legislation for a variety of reasons. We are happy to work with them to harmonize timelines and definitions to make it less confusing for implementation. However, we do ask that the committee seriously consider regulating the two additional PFAS that are in Maine state statute that are not in the EPA's regulations. Currently, Maine regulates two PFAS that are not regulated by the EPA, PFDA and PFHpA, and the EPA regulates two that are not regulated by Maine, GenX and PFBS. We agree that the two regulated by the EPA, GenX and PFBS, should be added to the list of chemicals regulated. But we disagree with the Department that the state should remove PFDA and PFHpA from its list of regulated chemicals. We understand that PFOA and PFOS are the most common legacy contaminants found in drinking water. That is because those two PFAS have been around for decades. PFDA and PFHpA are newer and therefore we may still see them show up in drinking water. Both PFDA and PFHpA are used in things like food packaging and stainproof coating on things like rugs and couches. Even though Maine is phasing out the use of PFAS in these things, there are still opportunities for contamination from products already in the state. We believe water systems should still be monitored for these chemicals.

Unlike other sources of PFAS contamination, like soil contamination, there are treatment technologies to remove PFAS from drinking water including granular activated carbon, reverse osmosis, and ion exchange systems. Public water systems can choose from multiple proven treatment options. These are the same types of treatment systems that are used to treat arsenic, lead, and other contaminants so there is no need for water systems to install separate systems.

All Mainers should have access to clean drinking water. LD 1326 will ensure that our public drinking water systems have the most health protective standards for PFAS in drinking water. We urge the committee to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1326.