

# AIELLO LAW

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Kristin L. Aiello

April 22, 2025

Senator Ingwersen  
Representative Meyer  
Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Cross Office Building, Room 209  
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: *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"*

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Kristin Aiello, and I am a resident of Hallowell and an attorney specializing in civil rights on behalf of adults and children with disabilities and other protected classes.

I am here to voice my strong support for LD 1326, which would establish enforceable Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for certain Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in public drinking water systems. I urge this committee to move this bill forward and to ensure that Maine's drinking water standards align with and are at least as protective as the levels recommended in 2024 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA standards represent the best available science and should be codified in Maine law.

PFAS, often referred to as "forever chemicals," have been linked to numerous serious health effects. Current peer-reviewed scientific studies noted by the EPA have shown that human exposure to PFAS may lead to increased risk of cancer, including prostate, kidney and testicular cancers; developmental effects or delays in children, such as low birth rate, accelerated puberty, bone variations, or behavioral changes; reproductive impacts such as decreased fertility and increased blood pressure in pregnant persons; interference with the body's natural hormones; increased cholesterol levels, and among other serious health problems. These substances are persistent in the environment and in our bodies, and even extremely low levels can pose significant health risks over time.

The EPA finalized Maximum Contaminant Levels for several PFAS last year. These science-based standards reflect years of research in the medical and environmental communities about the threat PFAS pose. Adopting these levels in Maine is a critical step in protecting our communities—especially vulnerable populations including children and pregnant women. Aligning Maine's water standards with the EPA's will ensure that all Mainers—no matter where they live—can trust

the safety of their drinking water. It will also provide clear guidance and accountability for water systems.

Public drinking water should not contain toxic contaminants. The reality is that in Hallowell and other communities, it does. Hallowell's contaminate level now exceeds both state and federal safe standards for PFAS. But last year, it was just below the state standard of 20 ppt but well above the federal standard of 4 ppt. This difference in "safe" levels created confusion for the public. The Hallowell Water District, relying on the outdated Maine standard, explicitly issued statements that Hallowell water was safe to drink, while I and other residents advocating for safe drinking water publicized that Hallowell water was unsafe to drink under federal standards. This difference in messaging, rooted in the different federal and state standards, was harmful to the public.

Chances are that many residents who turned on their kitchen faucet, served the water to their kids, their pets and guests, and drank it have no idea that they are consuming water that is unsafe. This is unacceptable, and the difference in messaging about the safety of something so basic and important as drinking water does a great disservice to the public. The standards must be properly aligned under the best available science.

I respectfully urge this committee to pass LD 1326 and protect the fundamental right of every Mainer to clean, safe drinking water. The science is clear, and the time to act is now.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on behalf of Maine's public health.

Sincerely,

*Kristin Aiello*

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