

Good afternoon,

My name is Nora Strande, and I'm from Minnesota.

I grew up living on soil and water contaminated with PFAS. I live in the East Metro of St. Paul, where one of the world's largest PFAS plumes is located. My community was poisoned by 3M dumping PFAS into the soil and streams in the area, similarly to how PFAS sludge has been dumped and spread across the farms of Maine.

Many people in my community are sick. At our local high school, there have been over 20 students diagnosed with rare diseases and cancers from 2001 to 2018. My sister, Amara, was one of those students. In 2017, Amara was diagnosed with an extremely rare liver cancer called Fibrolamellar Hepatocellular Carcinoma. Her first surgeries were to remove a 15-pound mass that was enmeshed in her liver. This surgery left her unconscious in the ICU for 40 days. Amara was 15 years old. A few months later, our family hears the announcement of the settlement between 3M and the state of Minnesota, earning the state over 800 million dollars in funds to clean up the water in our community. My family didn't know what this meant or how it affected us, but somehow we suspected that 3M's contamination might've been a cause of Amara's cancer. Over the following 5 years Amara underwent approximately 20 more surgeries and procedures, as her cancer doesn't respond well to chemo and radiation.

In 2023 Amara was given a unique opportunity. Avonna Starck, director of Clean Water Action MN, called on Amara to testify at the Minnesota Capitol in support of a law that would ban PFAS from consumer products. Though Amara was weak and she had just started hospice care, she said yes. For the following months, Amara would testify, telling her story about her community, her illness, and how she believed PFAS was the cause. But she died days before the law was voted on in the House and Senate. The law was later named Amara's Law after it passed.

Since then, my parents and I have been advocates for banning the use of PFAS across the country and the world. One of the many things we worked on was designating a federal Drinking Water Standard for PFAS, which was finalized last year. In Minnesota, we have no standard, and we rely on the federal government and the settlement money from 3M to keep our water safe. This is not enough. The federal rule can change; we could be left exposed to these chemicals at any point. States need to stand up and protect the people. Maine could be a leader in creating laws that protect people and the planet. Vote yes to LD 493, 500, and 1326.

Thank you.