



Mike Tipping
Senator, District 8

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and honorable members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Mike Tipping. I represent Senate District 8 in Penobscot County and I'm proud to present **LD 1604, An Act to Protect Groundwater and Surface Waters from Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances from Landfill Leachate.**

I grew up and my parents still live on the Stillwater Branch of the Penobscot River. I've spent a significant portion of my life canoeing the river and walking along the shore. I recently took my kids to see the same dinosaur of a snapping turtle I used to visit in a bend of the river when I was a kid.

Over the past 20 years, I've worked to protect the Penobscot from pollution, including working with environmental groups and the Penobscot Nation to hold the Mallinckrodt corporation responsible for dumping tons of mercury in the river. Three years ago, we finally won a legal settlement forcing them to pay for the largest citizen-initiated ecosystem-wide cleanup in history.

But now, there's a new threat to our rivers, streams and groundwater. I am deeply concerned about the findings of PFAS contamination at Juniper Ridge, just up the river from my family home, as well as at landfills across the state of Maine.

The Department of Environmental Protection's January 2024 Report to the legislature on Testing of Landfill Leachate for PFAS stated that "it is clear from the 25 landfills sampled that significant concentrations of PFAS are present at landfills and in landfill leachate that have the potential to impact groundwater or surface water in the vicinity of the landfills."

As you know, these toxic "forever chemicals," stay in the air, water, and soil, and our bodies for long periods of time. PFAS exposure is linked to cancer, thyroid disorders, or autoimmune disorders, liver damage, and more.

This bill would, for the first time, create limits for the discharge of PFAS into our water from landfills, allowing us to set maximum levels and hold polluters accountable.

It would make leachate disposal data publicly available, allowing municipalities and members of the public to know what's going into their water.

It would require third-party testing of landfill leachate, so we can ensure facilities are in compliance with discharge limits and treatment systems are working.

It would require free PFAS testing for residents with property close to landfills making sure they will know about and be able to address contamination before it harms their health.

This committee has already done vital work to get ahead of the threat PFAS poses to our environment and public health. I believe LD 1604 is an important next step to contain pollution and protect Maine people.

I appreciate your consideration and I'm happy to answer any questions.