



Solutions for a
Toxic-Free Tomorrow

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Defend Our Health
In SUPPORT of LD 1786, "An Act to Require the Department of Environmental Protection to
Provide Certain Information Regarding Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances to the
Public and Private Drinking Water Well Owners"
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
May 5, 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'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 1786, "An Act to Require the Department of Environmental Protection to Provide Certain Information Regarding Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances to the Public and Private Drinking Water Well Owners."

This past August, a faulty fire suppression system failed at Brunswick Landing, leading to over 1400 gallons of AFFF foam mixed with over 50 thousand gallons of water spilling into the surrounding community. It was the largest toxic chemical spill in Maine's history and the 6th largest in the U.S. This spill has had a detrimental impact on the community, contaminating nearby waterways and presenting a serious, long-term threat to soil, groundwater, air quality, and public health. While the impacts are still being investigated, we do know that shellfish in nearby streams are contaminated¹ and some residents have reported that levels in their private wells are increasing in the months since the spill.

In the wake of the spill, there was some frustration expressed by some of the residents of Brunswick about the information they were provided by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in regard to what is considered "safe" levels of PFAS in drinking water. There was confusion about the difference between Maine's drinking water standard and the newly released EPA drinking water standard, what they should be testing for, where they could find testing information, etc. While many of the requirements under LD 1786 are things the DEP is currently doing, it is not a statutory requirement. LD 1786 would make sure that information such as the current state and federal PFAS drinking water standards and testing and remediation resources available for private well owners would be made available, regardless of who is in charge of the DEP.

¹ Moravec, K. (2025, January 21). *Brunswick foam spill contaminated nearby fish, Dep confirms*. Press Herald.
<https://www.pressherald.com/2025/01/21/brunswick-foam-spill-contaminated-nearby-fish-dep-confirms/>



We would be remiss if we didn't point out that some of this information is available on the Health and Human Services Maine Drinking Water Program website, but it is often hard to find and confusing for people. Additionally, many people think that, because PFAS is a toxic chemical, the DEP is the correct Department to work with, regardless of how the PFAS ended up in their drinking water. While the DEP does provide some of this information on their website, again, it is sometimes hard to find and confusing for the average citizen. LD 1786 would make sure that those that got information from the DEP around hazardous chemical spills and other contaminants that could impact residential wells, were provided with the most up-to-date information in an easily understandable format.

We urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1786. Thank you.