

Letter in Support of Correcting Maine's PFAS Definition

Dear Maine Legislators,

My name is Alvin Winslow, and I am from New Gloucester, Maine. I own and manage Winslow Agriculture LLC, a business focused on hands-on agricultural services and advanced farming techniques. Over the past decade, I have partnered with Maine's farmers to help them become more sustainable and productive. My work supports over 10,000 acres of potatoes spanning from Fryeburg to Saint Agatha, as well as more than 10,000 acres of corn and grass on dairy farms across the state.

Agriculture has been central to my life and career. After graduating from Presque Isle High School in 1991, where I served as president of the State of Maine FFA, I pursued a degree in Agriculture and Resource Economics from the University of Maine, complemented by studies in agricultural sciences. I later earned a Master of Science in Business from Husson College. Through Winslow Agriculture LLC, I work to make a positive impact on both people and agriculture in Maine.

Today, I will address an issue that directly affects the farmers I work with and many other industries statewide. The current definition of PFAS adopted by this legislature has placed an unnecessary burden on Maine's communities, landowners, farmers, and businesses.

PFAS contamination is a serious issue in certain areas of Maine, such as Fairfield, where industrial waste streams were improperly managed. These communities have faced significant hardship, and addressing this contamination must remain a top priority. Those impacted by PFAS in these areas deserve our full support.

Outside these hotspots, however, the data indicates no significant risk to human health or the environment. According to the ATSDR (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Control) which is part of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) PFAS levels in human blood have steadily decreased over the past 25 years (see graph below). A vast majority of Maine people are not experiencing a PFAS crisis. Unfortunately, the legislature's adoption of an overly broad PFAS definition has created unnecessary problems where there is no substantial risk. At the time the original definition was adopted, the head of the Maine Board of Pesticide Control and the state toxicologist agreed that it was flawed and incorrect.

This definition has led to regulatory confusion and uncertainty, misclassifying harmless substances as PFAS and imposing undue costs on small businesses, farmers, and the forest industry. Entire industries are being jeopardized, not because of contamination, but due to a flawed policy and an incorrect definition. The legislative error affects tens of thousands of Maine workers and jobs. If we don't correct this issue, it will cause more people and jobs to leave Maine.

Exemptions have been granted to Maine's well-connected corporations, which have the resources to lobby for special treatment. Meanwhile, farmers, forestry, fishing, and small businesses—essential contributors to Maine's economy—are left bearing the weight of this mistake. This disparity prioritizes the interests of the wealthy over the livelihoods of hardworking Mainers. Multiple attempts by Maine farmers seeking an exemption have been shut down by the legislative process.

This situation is both unfair and unsustainable. Maine businesses are at risk of losing land, income, and opportunities because of a current PFAS definition creating many problems that do not exist. These are the Mainers who feed us, create our products, and drive our economy. They deserve better.

Rather than wasting more time amending or creating exemptions to address this flawed definition, we should fix the root of the problem. Adopting the federal definition of PFAS—a precise, science-based standard—will allow us to focus resources on areas truly in need, such as Fairfield, while alleviating unnecessary burdens elsewhere. The correct definition will help us address the problems that pose real risks to the people of Maine and our environment.

It is my belief that this legislature and our governor are committed to protecting Maine without causing undue hardship. Now is the time to correct this mistake. Let us redirect time, money, and resources toward meaningful solutions. Let us craft laws and assistance programs that genuinely help those in need.

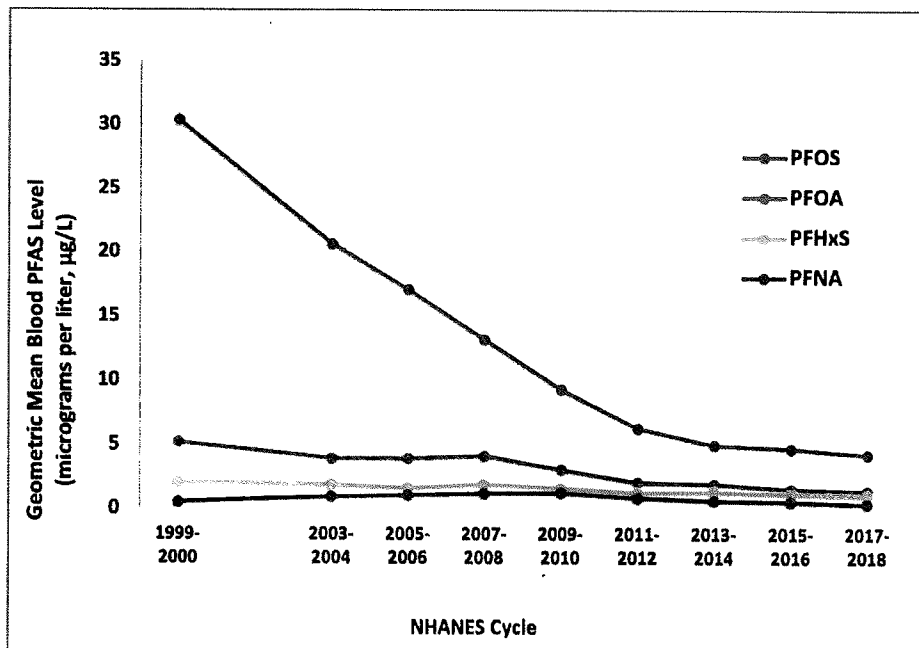
PFAS is a complex challenge, but flawed state rules should not compound the problem. Together, we can protect Maine's environment, improve lives, and safeguard our industries by adopting the proper definition.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Alvin Winslow, BS, MS, CCA, NMP

New Gloucester, Maine



Source: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/data-research/facts-stats/index.html>