



Written Testimony
Before the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
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March 2, 2021

Re: LD 125 – An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture

Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, and Members of the Committee,

Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) is pleased to offer this written testimony to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. CLF strongly supports LD 125, legislation that would prohibit the aerial spraying of glyphosate and other synthetic herbicides in forestry management.

CLF is a nonprofit, member-supported environmental organization working to protect Maine and New England’s environment for the benefit of all people. We use the law, science, and the markets to create solutions that preserve our natural resources, build healthy communities, and sustain a vibrant economy. CLF supports common-sense and scientifically based regulation of pesticides to protect communities and the environment.

Glyphosate is far too toxic to be sprayed over Maine’s forests. The World Health Organization’s International Agency for Research on Cancer has deemed glyphosate “probably carcinogenic to humans.”¹ This puts glyphosate in the same category as other dangerous substances, including a compound created for chemical warfare, a component of diesel exhaust, DDT, and a number of other pesticides now banned in the United States.² In addition, California has classified glyphosate as “known to cause cancer” under its well-regarded Proposition 65 consumer warning program.³

Glyphosate sprayed over Maine’s forests threatens the health of the pesticide applicators and the foresters and loggers who work in the area. In addition, Glyphosate sprayed aerially is likely to drift and put nearby homes and farms at risk. Glyphosate’s harm to humans has been proven in a number of recent court cases, with juries awarding more than \$2 billion in damages to

¹ International Agency for Research on Cancer, “Evaluation of Five Organophosphate Insecticides and Herbicides,” March 20, 2015, <https://www.iarc.who.int/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MonographVolume112-1.pdf>.

² Id. A full listing of IARC classified agents is available at <https://monographs.iarc.who.int/list-of-classifications>. The compound created for chemical warfare is nitrogen mustard.

³ California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, “Glyphosate Listed Effective July 7, 2017, as Known to the State of California to Cause Cancer,” <https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65/cnr/glyphosate-listed-effective-july-7-2017-known-state-california-cause-cancer>.

homeowners and a school groundskeeper who developed cancer after using glyphosate.⁴ Lawsuits from over 100,000 plaintiffs are pending, and the manufacturer of Roundup, the well-known herbicide containing glyphosate, has offered to pay more than \$10 billion to settle the cases.⁵ LD 125 would protect Mainers from this toxic pesticide.

In addition to being a risk to human health, glyphosate is an unacceptable danger to Maine's forest ecosystems. Last year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined that glyphosate threatens 93 percent of species listed under the Endangered Species Act and 96 percent of critical habitats.⁶ The EPA determined that glyphosate is toxic to mammals, birds, fish, and aquatic invertebrates and found a variety of chronic effects to growth and reproduction.⁷

Forestry is an integral and historic part of Maine's economy. We must manage our forests in both a responsible and economical way, including protecting the health and well-being of those who work in our forests. It is folly to allow the use of glyphosate in the pursuit of short-term profits that not only damages Maine's unique forest resources but also the men and women who sustain and harvest those resources.

CLF respectfully urges the Committee to act favorably on LD 125. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this issue. I am available to answer any questions the Committee may have about these comments.

⁴ Patricia Cohen, "Roundup Maker to Pay \$10 Billion to Settle Cancer Suits," *New York Times*, June 24, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/business/roundup-settlement-lawsuits.html>.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Environmental Protection Agency, "Draft National Level Listed Species Biological Evaluation for Glyphosate," Executive Summary, <https://www.epa.gov/endangered-species/draft-national-level-listed-species-biological-evaluation-glyphosate#executive-summary>.

⁷ Id.