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Testimony in Support of LD 125
An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
March 2, 2021

Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, my name is Stacy Brenner, and I represent Maine Senate District 30, which includes the town of Gorham and parts of the towns of Scarborough and Buxton. I am here today to offer brief testimony in support of LD 125 “An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture.”

In 2002, I moved to Maine with my husband and our young daughter to become first generation farmers. We quickly joined the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) journey person program that assists new growers and teaches them how to be farmers. A few years later, we opened Broadturn Farm, which produces cut flowers and organic vegetables. Since then, the operation has grown and now employs 15 people at the height of the season.

Having been certified as a pesticide applicator on our farm, and recalling the curriculum, the primary tenets include prioritizing targeting applications and avoiding broad spectrum products when possible. Applicators and anyone re-entering the area where a product has been applied needs to don personal protective equipment, PPE, something we are all familiar with these days.

During our time running Broadturn Farm, we have strived to focus on safe and sustainable agriculture to produce fresh vegetables and cut flowers for Mainers while keeping our staff safe from exposure to pesticides and herbicides and meeting our customer’s desire for local products. While this bill does not address the use of aerial herbicides in the agricultural industry, I truly believe that there is mounting evidence that aerial herbicide spraying has caused damage to Maine’s plants, aquatic life, wildlife and people. It is also difficult to control, since spray can drift long distances and affect the ecosystem in a variety of potential harmful ways. Not all creatures have access to PPE.

My concern for the use of aerial spraying goes beyond my experience in organic farming. As a nurse-midwife, I have serious concerns about the effects of aerial spraying on public health. Increasingly, Glyphosate has been tied to adverse and lingering health effects in humans,

including Parkinson's disease¹ and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma². In addition to that direct negative impact, the lack of control that is possible using aerial spraying allows for chemicals to enter Maine's groundwater and streams.

Maine is known for its beautiful scenery, clean environment, and abundant natural resources. We need to do everything we can to heed further damage to our ecosystems and take a leading role on this issue nationwide. Thank you so much for your time, and I would be happy to take any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Stacy Brenner
Maine Senate District 30

¹ <https://beyondpesticides.org/dailynewsblog/2020/05/glyphosate-in-roundup-linked-to-parkinsons-disease/>

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1383574218300887>