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THE MAINE SENATE
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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 Troy Jackson and I have the great honor of serving as President of the Maine Senate. I proudly represent District 1, which is northern Aroostook County stretching roughly from Caribou north to the St. John Valley. I am here today to present LD 125 "An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture".

As most of you know, I have lived in the town of Allagash my whole life. As a logger by trade, I have spent years working in the forest products industry. Because of this firsthand experience, I remember a time when in Allagash when jobs in the woods weren't as scarce and the practice of aerial spraying wasn't a part of any forestry management plan.

Starting roughly 30 years ago, that began to change. Large landowners started to incorporate aerial herbicide spraying as a part of their forestry management plan. The justification for the use of aerial spraying has always been that it is a necessary and useful practice — one that would regenerate the growth of our forests, protect our environment, and save jobs in the industry in the long run.

Since then, those of us who have worked in the woods and lived near the practice of spraying have seen the irreversible damage it has caused. We have seen the threat it poses to the health of our families, friends and neighbors. And today, more and more reports of the harmful effects of Glyphosate and other synthetic herbicides are confirming our suspicions.¹ Thousands of lawsuits have been filed against the company Bayer, which develops, manufactures and sells the prominent weed killer, Round-up, for failing to warn consumers about the dangers of their products, specifically Glyphosate.² Round-Up was originally manufactured and sold by

¹ www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1383574218300887

² www.nytimes.com/2019/03/19/business/monsanto-roundup-cancer.html

Monsanto, which was purchased by Bayer in 2018.³ In 2019, a court in California ruled in favor of a couple who developed Cancer following the use of this product.⁴

It's my strong belief that aerial spraying of glyphosate and other chemicals has also had detrimental effects on wildlife and our natural environment. If you go to an area that has been sprayed by these aerial herbicides, the silence will take your breath away. It's quite striking. There are no birds chirping, no squirrels running around and no trace of wildlife. For those of you who served on this committee two years ago, you recall that I invited members to look at some of these areas for yourself. While opponents of this bill will say that aerial spraying is safe and monitored, the truth is that it is impossible to control exactly where these chemicals end up. Aerial spraying can drift over long distances, and the lingering presence of these chemicals gets into groundwater and streams, and harms wildlife and plants alike. To me, the damage in these areas is clear. It makes you wonder.

There are also opponents that say banning aerial spraying will have a negative impact on jobs in our area. To put it bluntly, these are nothing more than scare tactics. I can't help but point out that these same opponents are often the ones hiring cheaper Canadian workers in jobs that could and should be filled by Mainers. Instead, Mainers living in those areas are not only left behind economically, they are the ones who are left to live near areas where aerial spraying takes place, while Canadian citizens working in Maine return home across the border.

As I hinted at in my introduction, I know very well that there was a time when jobs in the woods were more plentiful, and our wildlife and natural environment were respected and protected. These two phenomena were not in opposition — they went hand in hand. This dynamic existed long before aerial spraying was a common practice.

Many municipalities in Maine have already taken steps on their own to ban this practice,⁵ including my hometown of Allagash.⁶ The reality is, the use of aerial herbicides in the Maine woods benefits the bottom-line of large landowners at the expense and well-being of the people living and working in the region. It's time we recognize the harm done by aerial spraying of Glyphosate and other synthetic chemicals. It's time we do the right thing and put an end to this practice.

Thank you so much for your time, and I would be happy to take any questions you may have.

³ www.cnbc.com/2018/06/07/germanys-bayer-closes-monsanto-deal-plans-to-drop-us-companys-name.html

⁴ www.nytimes.com/2019/05/13/business/monsanto-roundup-cancer-verdict.html

⁵ www.maine.gov/dacf/php/pesticides/public/municipal_ordinances.shtml

⁶ www.maine.gov/dacf/php/pesticides/documents2/municipal%20ordinances/Allagash_Ordinance.pdf

Sincerely,

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