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Testimony of Sen. Chloe Maxmin supporting

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

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, and honorable members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

My name is Chloe Maxmin. I represent Senate District 13, which includes all of Lincoln County except for Dresden, plus Washington and Windsor—a total of twenty-two towns. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LD 125, An Act To Prohibit the Aerial Spraying of Glyphosate and Other Synthetic Herbicides for the Purpose of Silviculture.

Nearly 90 percent of Maine’s land is covered by forest, and throughout our state’s history the stewardship and responsible management of these lands has been critical to our culture and economy. As Mainers have looked for ways to grow and cultivate this natural asset of ours, aerial spraying of glyphosate and other synthetic herbicides has become a routine part of forest management.

However, there is growing evidence that glyphosate is harmful to humans and animals. Glyphosate has been linked to negative health outcomes in people, including reduced liver and kidney function, endocrine disruption, chromosomal damage and damage to fetal development. Herbicides harm wildlife by limiting their habitats and their food sources and altering their ecosystems. Herbicides can also persist in the environment and have negative consequences long after they have served their intended purpose.

When sprayed aerially, glyphosate and other synthetic herbicides can travel well beyond the area they are intended to treat. So-called “controlled” sprays of these substances are not effective in containing the herbicides, which can drift miles through the air. This drifting has been known to contaminate organic produce grown by farmers who do not themselves use these substances, and who must surrender the label of “organic” through no fault of their own. When there are other safe and effective ways to manage growth, we owe it to small businesses to help them protect their product by banning this practice.



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Opponents of this measure argue that banning the aerial spraying of these herbicides may result in a loss of jobs, but there is no reason to believe that protecting jobs and protecting our environment can't go hand-in-hand. In fact, we need to protect our health and the health of our environment if we have any hope of relying on it for our economy in the decades to come.

Existing state policies discourage reliance on pesticides, but the practice of aerial herbicide spraying continues to grow in our state. It's time for the Legislature to take action to help support the health and well-being of Maine's people, environment and economy by banning the aerial spraying of substances like glyphosate.

Thank you for your time, and for your consideration of this legislation. I am happy to answer any questions.