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Brooks  
LD 2013

Honorable Senators and Representatives

Testimony for the LD 2013 Hearing on Tuesday 3/15 at 9 a.m., to Support Farmers Impacted by PFAS Contamination

The future of farming in Maine depends on how we meet the challenges of PFAS contamination on our farms and farmland. Our farmers need robust support to address the health and financial impacts of PFAS contamination, and Maine needs robust support for research and remediation so that we have the farmland we need for our future. LD 2013 would provide that assistance by establishing a fund and associated advisory committee to invest \$100 million in farmer support.

“If sludge consisted purely of human waste, and if humans weren’t subject to so many toxins and pollutants through the course of our everyday lives, and if pathogens in sludge were reduced to zero, and if landowners could keep strict control over access to their property, then there would be fewer risks to using sludge agriculturally.

Unfortunately, sludge does contain hundreds of toxic chemicals, heavy metals, and pathogens. And, unfortunately, laws allow sludge containing live pathogens to be spread into soils, groundwaters and surface waters of our state. And unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to keep wildlife, farm animals, and humans out of sludge spread fields used on agricultural land.

In the past, Wastewater treatment facilities could only dispose of sludge in one of three ways: by sending it to a landfill, by incinerating it, or by dumping it 100 miles offshore into the ocean. Dumping in the oceans caused huge areas of dead sea life as a result of the toxic contamination.”

“Sludge disposal, once limited to landfills and incineration became expensive for Industrial wastewater treatment plants and Municipal treatment facilities.”

At some point in the early 1980s, industrial entities pressured the EPA to relax its standards to allow for the land spreading of sludge on agricultural fields.” As a result the unthinkable happened; corporate sludge marketing companies and municipal wastewater treatment facilities were successful in relaxing the limits of toxins in sludge for land spreading. They began marketing this to farmers as a legitimate alternative to costly fertilizers.

As we now know this has caused severe impacts on Maine Farmland’s so important to our economy and well being. This is a travesty!

To dispose of this toxic sludge, these private corporations convinced farmers and landowner across the country to spread sludge on their fields as a nutrient supplement for their crops. They should be held responsible to pick up the costs for this deplorable situation.

But in the meantime, The State needs to support Maine Farmers and people who are now impacted by these cancer causing toxic chemicals that industrial brokers sold us with lies that it was safe. We need to quickly find solutions to decontaminating wherever possible and funding alternative uses for such farmland, like possibly as solar farms or other ways for farmers to make a living. We need research, we need YOU - the State Legislators to make this right and then to litigate the impacts of this damage to our lands on the Industrial community that caused this problem.

Please support Ld2013 and all other bills intended to remediate this Problem.