

Hillary Barter  
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LD 2013

Greetings ACF Committee Representatives,

I would like to testify in support of LD 2013. I try to buy a lot of Maine-grown food and regularly buy food from one of the farms that has discovered severe PFAS contamination in their soil and water. I have been very disturbed to read about this crisis over the past weeks and months. While I certainly see industry as being at the root of this crisis, the state of Maine issued (and issues) licenses for this sludge to be spread and thus bears responsibility to respond appropriately. An appropriate response, in my mind, must include income replacement for these farms, who have been plowing their resources back into their businesses for decades only to discover that their land and water sources are contaminated because of this destructive practice. Support in accessing healthcare services also seems like a key component of this response, as well as assistance for farmers to sell back contaminated land and relocate. The funding that would be made available by this bill is essential.

Part of why this is so important to me is that I'm afraid of what will happen if there is hesitancy on the part of other farms to test. For the good of all Mainers, we need the MANY other Maine farms which have not yet tested their water and soil to be willing to do so, especially if they know that sludge has been spread and land could potentially be contaminated by PFAS chemicals. (And even if they wouldn't necessarily be tested by state agencies for some time.) Without supports in place, many of these farmers will - rightly so - feel afraid to test, as the results could cause them to lose everything they have spent their lives building and improving. (Their businesses, their land.) We need to encourage more farms to test and can do so by confidently telling them that they will be supported no matter the results.

Sincerely,  
Hillary Barter