



# SIERRA CLUB

## MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

From: Becky Bartovics, Sierra Club Maine

Date: March 15, 2022

Re: **Testimony in Support of LD 2013 - An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State**

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Good Morning, Senator Dill and Representative O'Neil and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. My name is Becky Bartovics, from North Haven where I have a small livestock and vegetable operation. I am speaking on behalf of Sierra Club Maine and our nearly 22,000 members and activists. Our Chapter is one of 64 Sierra Club chapters. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide and protect everyone's right to a healthy world.

We urge you to support LD 2013 and vote "ought to pass" for this urgently needed legislation. As you will have heard, the chemical industries have suppressed the toxic nature of PFAS and PFOS as well as many other chemicals in this group of "forever" man-made products. They have known of their products' toxicity since the early 1950's. Greed won out. Far worse even than the damage that tobacco has done to so many individuals, the broad use and even broader evidence of these chemicals throughout the environment world-wide is shocking. Long term, these companies should be held accountable.

While some may want to keep their heads in the sand, these "forever" chemicals are here, and they cause damage to the health of our citizens and all life in Maine.<sup>12</sup>

What can we do about it? First and foremost, we need to support the farmers who have come forward to reveal the poisoning on their farms by allocating \$100 million to provide a safety net for them. We need to support the impacted farmers through income replacement, and potentially buying out their poisoned farmland. That is the very least we can do.

Impacted communities need medical monitoring programming and support to deal with potential health outcomes for their communities. This is an environmental justice concern. Under no circumstances should communities that have had PFAS enter their water supply or their farms destroyed, be left to their own devices to overcome health impacts that have been visited upon them.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8298860/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/pfas-contamination-safe-drinking-water-study>

As a State we allowed, even encouraged, the spreading of PFAS and PFOS laden sludge. We have hoodwinked our farmers into believing that this compost was good for our soil and good for farming. While it has provided a very nice, free service to large scale municipal sewage treatment facilities, and the haulers their income, unsuspecting farmers have poisoned their fields and subsequently their livestock, their vegetable products, and their water supplies.

Maine has a growing number of young farmers, and new farmers who have brought new life to their communities. Local farms, local produce and local farmers markets enliven Maine's communities. We must be able to trust our state's farming branding, locally and nationally. Providing for farmers to evaluate their land and have recourse will help the rest of us who farm here maintain trustworthy reputations and continue to increase local consumption of our products.

This bill not only will support the farmers whose businesses have been destroyed, whose health is likely impacted, and others who have yet to know that they are impacted, but it will also help to preserve the rest of the farms in Maine. I narrowly escaped spreading sludge on my farm, mostly due to the fact that bringing it to an island was too expensive. I have yet to learn if my own purchase of reportedly organic compost contained sewage sludge. I hope not as I have a large number of loyal customers here on the island. They love fresh vegetables, wool products and even the meat we produce. If we do not support our impacted farmers, we can expect repercussions to our other farms. Please support these farmers, and vote Ought to Pass on LD 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Bartovics  
Sierra Club Maine