



March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
C/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**RE: L.D. 2013, “An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State”**

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

I am the co-founder of Dirigo Solar and, together with our partners at BNRG Renewables, we are among Maine’s leading solar developers. We are also some of Maine’s leading proponents of low-cost solar and are aware of, and highly sensitive to, concerns around solar siting on agricultural lands.

For over a year, we have been working on the issue of siting solar on PFAS-contaminated land. This has involved engagement with farmers who have lost their livelihoods due to PFAS contamination, members of the legislature, and an array of other stakeholders who share an interest in well-sited solar, including Maine Farmland Trust, the Sportsmen’s Alliance of Maine, Maine Audubon, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and the Nature Conservancy. There is widespread agreement that PFAS-contaminated agricultural land is an ideal location for solar.

Thus, we are excited to see language in L.D. 2013 which includes solar development as a potential purpose for the proposed Fund to Address PFAS Contamination. However, we would like to respectfully urge the Committee to consider additional language for this legislation.

**Allow solar development in place of agricultural use**

A number of the farmers who have found extensive PFAS contamination on their land have had to kill off livestock and destroy crops as a result. The land that once made up their entire livelihood now cannot be used for agricultural use without significant remediation – a solution which does not currently exist. Therefore, we would ask that you please include language that specifically allows solar development in place of agricultural uses, instead of just in combination with agricultural uses. This could be achieved in the “Purposes” section of the Fund to Address PFAS Contamination in Part E, as follows:

E. Assisting an agricultural enterprise with land found to be contaminated by PFAS with developing enterprise budgets for alternative cropping systems or transitioning to alternative agricultural enterprise revenue streams, including but not limited to land use systems combining or replacing agricultural use of the land with solar energy production;



**Allow distribution of funds to offset interconnection costs for solar development on PFAS lands**

PFAS-contaminated sites are not necessarily located in areas of the State where grid interconnection costs are least expensive (we are happy to share data from our extensive portfolio of projects which bears this out). This Committee has an opportunity to start addressing the emerging issue of PFAS-contamination by putting contaminated land to productive reuse and providing much needed relief to farmers. Importantly, taking a bolder position on directing the development of renewables to PFAS-contaminated land will send a market signal that Maine is serious about redeveloping contaminated sites. Developers will take note of this signal and seek out contaminated sites for development. Adding an additional line under the “Purposes” section for the Fund to Address PFAS contamination to specifically allow funds to be used to offset interconnection costs will help achieve this goal.

We appreciate your time and attention to this important issue. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Robert Cleaves  
Co-Founder, Dirigo Solar LLC  
[bob@dirigosolar.com](mailto:bob@dirigosolar.com)  
(207) 671-0152