

I am writing in solidarity with all of our small commercial farmers and food producers in Maine and I am urging you to support LD 2013 for those families and community members who are deeply impacted by the presence of PFAS on their land.

Maine's farming families have committed to a lifelong career of providing locally grown food for Mainers. But we all know that it is much more than a career: Many families live on the farmland that they work. Their farming has no set schedule and is interwoven into every other aspect of their lives.

In many rural towns, our farmers are central members of the communities, building a network of connection and communication through their presence as stewards and providers for their fellow community members. These families, whose futures are physically and economically at risk, must be supported. Rural Maine deserves better.

These families have supported Maine's restaurant boon, providing the fresh ingredients that help make these businesses the national successes they have become. These family-owned farms are an integral part of Maine's economy and their presence as a positive impact on Maine's tourism industry cannot be denied. It is critical that we support these farmers - in immediate hazard pay AND long term pay and healthcare as they transition their farms to other means of use for their families.

Our farmers are faced with horrendous loss right now as they grapple with the fallout from the presence of PFAS on their land. They need immediate financial assistance, as they face immediate economic hardship in the coming growing seasons. In addition, we need a long term plan to financially support the families who have made the lifelong economic commitment to farm in Maine and who are forever economically impacted by the PFAS that were spread on their land without their knowledge.

Finally, it is crucial that we build a healthcare package to support farmers whose exposure to these harmful chemicals is detrimental to their health. It is critical that they have reliable healthcare as they navigate these uncertain times for their families.

I believe we are at a critical point in Maine's response to PFAS. The misuse of PFAS has been ignored for too long. Maine's farming future depends on our actions today.

Thank you for your consideration.

Heather D'Ippolito
Bremen, ME