

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neill and esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Johanna Davis and I am an organic farmer in Unity testifying in support of LD 2013. Farmers in your state need your help. The discovery of PFAS contamination on our farm has been devastating. Our well and irrigation water are 400 times above the state's safety threshold. Our soils are highly contaminated. Many of our most profitable crops are contaminated. Our bodies have levels of PFAS chemicals 150-200 times that of an average American. Our three year old son will be seeing a pediatric endocrinologist every six months to monitor his health and development because of this high industrial level exposure to PFAS.

We moved back to Maine 11 years ago to start our farm. We have put years upon years of sweat and love into our business, into our land and into our home. Now we have nothing. The sludge was spread on our farm more than 20 years before we bought this property. I was three years old.

I am speaking out today because my family needs your help. We stopped our product sales in late December when we received high test results back for PFAS in our water, soil and crops. But the state has done nothing to assist us with income replacement. If we are to stay in Maine, continue farming and start our business again somewhere else we NEED your help. How do we get out of this place we're in? We have no business, no jobs and don't even feel safe with our three year old playing at his home. But who would buy this farm? How would we ever get the investments we've put into this place back? Just in 2021 we drilled a new well, bought a new irrigation system, built a new greenhouse and packing shed. We've been scraping by pouring everything we have back into this place. We need your help. And its not just us.

What of the farmers that can't put everything on the line by speaking out or pulling their products? Organic farmers, conventional farmers, farmers deep in debt, farmers with no one to turn too. The state of Maine issued the licenses and promoted the usage of sludge. It is VITAL that now the state provides support to those who are at the most risk because of those decisions. The farmers in Maine need this support and we need it fast.

The impacts of this contamination will be with us always. But the state can decide how the story goes now. I hope it will be one of support, a story to be proud of, a story other states can look to as they chart a pathway forward around PFAS.

The harm can't be undone but accepting responsibility and providing crucial support to those directly affected can change the course of the crisis.

The state of Maine has an obligation to its farmers, its businesses and its people.

Thank you for your time and for listening.

I'm happy to answer an questions.

Thank you.

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