

**Testimony of Nate Drummond to the 130th Legislature's Joint Standing
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry**

March 15, 2022

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, I am submitting testimony today in support of LD 2013, "An Act Related to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State."

I am submitting testimony today in support of LD 2013.

My wife Gabrielle and I own and operate Six River Farm, an organic vegetable farm in Bowdoinham, Maine. We consider ourselves very lucky that at this point none of our farmland has been identified as being at high risk for PFAS contamination. But we are heart broken for the farms in our state that have not been so lucky and more than a little bit nervous for those of us "in the clear" for what may still yet be discovered.

Farming is a unique occupation in the degree to which its participants are tied to the physical place of their business. The fields and soils that comprise a farm are the basis for every operational decision a farmer makes, and as such each and every farm is uniquely structured to its physical place. Farmers commit themselves to maintaining and improving the land they use, often in Maine for multiple generations. And in Maine, almost all farms are family farms. Farmers and their families live on the farm. Their kids eat the food they grow and drink water from the farm well. When they are little, they put the farms soil in their mouths! (And more than you'd think! I know this first hand!). And just about every Maine farmer I have ever met aspires to have their kids (or siblings or employees) eventually take over the farm they run, to take over the stewardship of the land that they hold dear.

This is why the PFAS crisis is so devastating to Maine farms. It doesn't just threaten the financial livelihoods of Maine farmers (although it does to a terrible degree), it also threatens the health of Maine farm families and the ideals and stewardship vested in farming.

As a farmer, I cannot easily assign blame for this crisis. As we've all learned recently PFAS chemicals have become omnipresent in our world, used in a bewildering range of commercial products of which each and everyone of us has certainly sought out and purchased because of the very qualities PFASs imbide. Yet, while we all, as participants in our modern industrial world, bear responsibility for the PFASs that surround us, it is clear that the State of Maine bears a unique responsibility for the PFAS crisis that now confronts farms in Maine. While everyone on this committee is undoubtedly familiar with the State's role, it bears repeating: A State licensing program, run by the DEP, resulted in the poisoning of farmland and farm families across the state.

LD2013 is an important step in the State of Maine meeting its responsibility to the farmers of Maine. I ask that you pass it unanimously and with full funding.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nathan Drummond

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