

Mary Hanson
Belfast
LD 2013

Dear Committee Members,

Please support LD 2013. This bill gives us the best option to honestly confront the PFAS contamination poisoning our farms as well as providing us with funds to support farmers reeling from the devastation that it's causing.

My daughter, born and raised in Maine, and her husband chose to settle in Maine to create their dream of an organic vegetable farm. Their young energy and constant hard work resulted in a thriving agricultural enterprise, providing a model for other young farmers. With the discovery of significant PFAS contamination in their wells (they await their soil tests) and few options for remediating their irrigation system, the future of their work is doubtful. They stand to lose their business and face significant concerns about long-term consequences to their health and to that of their young child.

The suffering that they face now, as do many other farmers in Maine, is the result of short-term thinking thirty years ago, an attempt to get rid of a difficult problem in an "out of sight, out of mind" way. We cannot respond to this toxic reckoning with the same refusal to acknowledge that our actions have long-term consequences. We need to pass LD 2013 so that our current farmers can be supported in whatever they need to do: change their products if possible, leave their farms if necessary, or find other uses for it if at all feasible.

We also need to fund research into these chemicals so that we can learn more about their effects and focus on how to remediate their consequences. This, as you all know, takes commitment and money. As a seventy-one-year-old, I have learned this: ignoring problems rarely makes them go away or results in better outcomes, especially when we know that they are problems that last "forever."

Unless we pass this bill, farmers across Maine will continue to face horrible decisions: react responsibly to limit PFAS spread by stopping or restricting agricultural production on poisoned land or, as I know some are doing, ignoring PFAS's documented toxicity because livelihoods are at stake. One group will face economic devastation while the other group will continue to produce tainted products and further pollute the land/water. Neither option makes sense for the future of our State.

We owe it to everyone in Maine, as well as the generations to follow us, to address this issue now and to take steps to support our farmers in working to create a safe agricultural system that can provide us with goods and services that are safe to eat and that enrich rather than poison our land and water.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your Committee's support of LD 2013 and your advocacy for the bill as it moves forward through the legislative process.