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I am a proud Mainer. One of the things I love most about our State is the number of small, independent organic farms that have been established by intrepid, hard working individuals. Farms are the heart of the community and local food production is key to reducing our harmful impact on the environment. I write to testify in support of this bill.

The state of Maine issued the licenses for the sludge containing PFAS to be spread in the past, and therefore it is the state of Maine's responsibility to deliver support to farms adversely affected by this destructive decision. While I have not had my land tested for PFAS yet, I'm friends with a number of growers whose primary on-farm water source was tested at well over 100X higher than Maine's PFAS safety threshold. These test results have led some to make the difficult decision not to grow crops on their land this year, and forced them to consider relocating their farms and homes. They have also had to carry the burden of worrying for the health of their families after years of drinking water/tilling land contaminated by PFAS.

Many Mainers love buying local produce, grains, cheese and meats. We should put our money where our mouths are and support the local farmers who make these foods possible.

I sincerely hope this bill passes so that we retain all the amazing growers we have in Maine, and so that the state's food system can regenerate and be revitalized.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of my testimony.