



Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

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Testimony of Suzanne Lafreniere, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese
in support of LD 2013
An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances
Contamination in the State

Senator Dill and Representative O’Neil, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture Conservation and Forestry, my name is Suzanne Lafreniere and I represent the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland in its support of LD 2013. The Diocese has a population of over 279,000 Catholics* or one-fifth of the total population of the state of Maine. In addition to its 141 churches organized into 55 parishes, it has 10 elementary schools, one private elementary school, one diocesan high school and one private high school. It also includes one Catholic college, Saint Joseph’s College of Maine in Standish.

In his Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, On Care for Our Common Home, Pope Francis calls on Catholics and people of goodwill to acknowledge “the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet.” Pope Francis chose his papal name to honor St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of those who promote ecology. Pope Francis describes “the poor man of Assisi” as “a man of peace, a man of poverty, a man who loved and protected creation” – in other words, a person who embodies *integral ecology*.

LD 2013 would help Maine families who are in the unbelievable position of owning unusable land. Growers need our support. When PFAS related issues are found, there needs to be a reporting system and support given. Creating an Advisory Committee on the Fund To Address PFAS Contamination and one time funding is a necessary first step.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has said, we are called not only to respect the natural environment, but also to show respect for, and solidarity with, all the members of our human family. The Roman Catholic Diocese has a long history of speaking out on environmental health concerns both here in Maine and on the national level. Our commitment to protecting the health and dignity of all is unwavering.

I urge you to vote this Ought to Pass. Thank you for your time and consideration today.

*www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/maine/