



To: Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Conservation, 130th Maine State Legislature
Re: LD 2013 - An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State
Date: 3/15/22

Dear Senator Dill, Representative O'Neill, and honorable members of the Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of Waldo County Bounty's board, staff, our broad network of partners, and volunteers to urge you to vote **ought to pass** for LD 2013 - An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination. Waldo County Bounty is a hunger relief organization working to improve access to locally-grown foods for people experiencing food insecurity in Waldo County, Maine through cross-sector planning, collaboration, and fundraising.

Since our early pandemic-era launch, we have leveraged nearly \$500,000 toward hunger relief, purchased 55,000# and gleaned 58,500# of food from dozens of farms for use in 16 hunger relief agencies, mobilized more than 85 volunteers completing thousands of high skill and labor hours, collaborated with a dozen+ local and state organizations, engaged hundreds of grassroots donors, distributed 769,000# of food for the USDA Farms to Families commodity program, and reached 8,000 people facing food insecurity with our programs. We have touched every part of Waldo County's food system through these milestones and intimately know its people, challenges, and opportunities.

We are unrelentingly committed to ensuring that everyone in our region has access to healthy, appropriate, and safe food. Generally, this has meant addressing food insecurity, lack of access, and poverty related issues. Today our commitment to food security means that we must stand in solidarity with farmers who have been impacted by PFAS contamination due to no fault of their own and with devastating economic, farmer health, community safety, and food system stability impacts.

Farmers and farm businesses were some of the first leaders to contribute to our efforts to serve the most vulnerable in our community and to create innovative pathways for a successful food system as we navigated COVID-19. Specifically, Songbird Farm in Unity and New Beat Farm in Knox (both impacted by PFAS) were immediate collaborators in creating a safety net for our vulnerable neighbors. **Unfortunately, there is no safety net in place to relieve farmers during this unprecedented time of need.** Further testing is indicating that many other farms are impacted, which means our whole state's food system is at risk including farmers AND people who already faced barriers to good food.

Please act immediately to offer ALL farmers support such as income replacement and mortgage payments; lifetime health monitoring; new infrastructure, support for new business models, and farm management practices; relocation services and farm buyout; and research on soil and water remediation methods. **Please vote to pass LD 2013** so we can move help to where it is needed most.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary R. Leaming".

Mary Leaming Unity, ME
Waldo County Bounty, Board President