

*Testimony in support of LD 2013, An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State*

To: Senator Dill and Members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee

From: Abby Sadauckas, 538 Millay Rd Bowdoinham, Apple Creek Farm

Dear Senator Dill and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Abby and I live in Bowdoinham. I'm an organic farmer and the Maine Field Agent for the New England based non-profit, Land For Good. I am writing in support of LD 2013. As a livestock farmer, my livelihood is tied to the health of Maine's environment. I came to Maine in the early 2000's drawn by what I saw as a shared love and respect for the natural world. I left behind my home town where residents had been selling gas rights to multi-national corporations for decades and where today many cannot bathe in or drink the water coming out of their taps. I love my adopted state for how those of us who make our living from the state's abundant natural resources make visible the importance of our environment to those that visit.

However, this perception has been undermined in part by the recent discovery that a considerable amount of farmland has been spread with PFAS chemicals. I grieve alongside these impacted farmers because I know many of them personally. In my former roles within MOFGA I helped these folks when they were would-be farmers. I have matured as a farmer myself alongside many of them and know that these farmers have already made it through the most trying first 10 years of establishing their businesses. For many, these discoveries force them into what ag service providers dub a "re-strategizing" phase of farm development. Many of these farmers have already gone through that stage at least once as they have modified their businesses to expand sales to wholesale markets, started a multi-farm distribution company or expanded their farm worker crew to create better work life balance. Programs to support these "re-strategizers" are limited and often only available on a once-a-year basis that may not align with the timing of even planned changes. So establishing a program to aid farmers impacted by the discovery of PFAS on their land is crucial. In addition, wrap-around support to help them cope with the grief they feel in the loss of their livelihood, their dreams, their ability to keep their children safe and healthy should also be provided. Offering ongoing health monitoring for these folks also makes good sense and will provide the state with essential data to understand the impact of these chemicals on our residents. I ask that you consider inclusion in these programs for anyone whose life or health was impacted by PFAS, not just farmers but those living adjacent to farms or those for whom this constitutes a life change.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of LD 2013. Creating a comprehensive program to support those most impacted by PFAS contamination is a worthy endeavor.

Abby Sadauckas