

Jeff Thomsen
Camden
LD 2013

Dear Cheryl Chapman, Clerk of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:
As recent half time residents to Maine, and future full time residents, we are inspired by the farm-to-table and local organic food movement in Maine. Maine is a forerunner in this movement and it's one of the things which attracts us to living here. We are still learning about this movement and have been tracking various related topics as we ourselves are long time organic gardeners. This vibrant movement is unlike any other we're aware of, and we are thrilled to be supporters of local farmers and restaurants. We are also very impressed with the recent passage of the nation's first "right to food" amendment to the Maine State constitution. It illustrates just how important local, safe, organically grown food is to Maine. We are so impressed with how far ahead Maine is in understanding how important it is to protect sovereign food rights. We currently live in Texas, and though there are some of us who share this mindset, I can almost guarantee you, you will never see anything as dramatic as legislation protecting safe food growing practices, or organic farmers, or truly healthy food. In Texas, big business and corporate interests reign supreme.

Unfortunately, a growing appreciation of the risks posed by the presence and lingering persistence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in soil, water, and crops, highlights an increasingly significant issue which directly affects Maine's farming community. As concerned part time, soon to be full time, Maine citizens, consumers, and supporters of our local food producers, we urge you to support LD 2013 to help support those farmers impacted by PFAS contamination.

Unlike other states where PFAS contamination may be attributed to direct discharge from industrial facilities, the University of Maine notes that here in Maine PFAS contamination is linked to the land application of waste water treatment residuals including sludge, septage, or biosolids. For many years this was considered, erroneously, as a beneficial reuse, and the State is to be commended for its efforts to now investigate, assess, and mitigate the impacts of this contamination.

As the scope of this issue continues to unfold, LD 2013 would greatly assist Maine farmers deal with the health and financial impacts created by PFAS contamination of farmland and water - which may well have occurred years before these producers acquired or leased their property. The "Fund to Address PFAS Contamination", and the related Advisory Committee, which this legislation creates, are vitally important to supporting affected farmers with income replacement and mortgages payments, health monitoring, and research into alternatives necessary to address this contamination and support the continued development of Maine's agricultural sector.

Thank you!
Jeff and Amy Thomsen, Camden, ME and Burton, TX