

## Testimony in Support of **LD 2013: An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State**

To: Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

From: Jenni Tilton-Flood, Dairy Farmer, Mum, and Mainer

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry,

My name is Jenni Tilton-Flood and I come to you as a dairy farmer, a mum, and a Mainer...in short, I am a person who feeds Maine. I feed my family, my friends and neighbours, and through our family dairy farm, cows, and working lands we produce fresh, quality, local Maine milk that finds its way onto the tables of our fellow Mainers throughout our state each and every day.

This is an intimate and impactful thing...this way of life we have had the privilege of choosing that is also the way we make our living. It's a blessing, a calling, a privilege, a joy, and most importantly- it is a responsibility. People trust us to put food on their table. Good food from a good place and for nearly a century our family has done this, day in, day out. We have been entrusted by those we call friends and those who are strangers to do what is right and do what is necessary to nourish not just bodies but our communities.

It is something we are grateful for EVERY DAY.

It is a trust we are dedicated to maintaining EVERY DAY.

It is a responsibility we take seriously EVERY DAY.

And today I am here to tell you that this dairy farmer, mum, and Mainer...this Mainer who feeds Mainers... wakes up EVERY DAY concerned and riddled with worry that all of our work is for naught because of the presence and threat of Forever Chemicals in the soils, waters and working lands of our nearby communities, some of which we depend upon to feed our herd. We see the pain and the agony of those who applied the State sponsored, approved, and permitted products decades ago after being told that it was safe; we see the pain and agony of those who live with the ramifications of that spreading on what they thought was their forever farm or their forever home; we feel the same fear and pain and agony of those whose lives are upended and health, livelihood, and futures are threatened, impacted, and, devastated. It is a soul crushing pain and agonizing experience to question the safety and health of the soils you tend, the cows you steward, and the food you put on your neighbours' tables. And it is a nightmare that doesn't end for those of us who are battling this even though we have never applied these products to our lands. We have given up hundreds of acres of rented cropland, invested our own monies in doing the due diligence necessary to find the truth and be able to continue to live up to the trust and

responsibility we are so grateful for. And like other farms we have done so as islands-struggling to stitch together a community of understanding and expertise, empathy and strength, resources and assistance. We are thankful for the assistance of service providers, our agronomists, Cooperative Extension, Northern Tilth, MDACF, MDEP, Maine Dairy Promotion Board & Maine Dairy & Nutrition Council, MFT, MOFGA, and the support from our partners in feeding our communities like Waldo County Bounty and Veggies For All, and so many more...but the reality is that the true support has come from our peers and colleagues. That is the true reason behind my urging you to forward LD 2013: ***the community that feeds this state, is the engine that drives our economy and landscapes, and nourishes our state from the inside out needs the people of Maine as much as the people of Maine need us.***

This financial note is enormous, but we all know it will not be enough.

This ask is is overwhelming, but we all know it needs to be done.

The scope of this action is broad but when, WHEN has a lifeboat ever been too big?

This bill is monumental and ground breaking. It needs tweaking (*it needs more Ag representation, more Doers and not just Title Holders, and there needs to be a representation of health care providers*) But this bill is a start. These Forever Chemicals do not spontaneously appear in sludge and municipal waste...it doesn't mysteriously show up at the farm. It comes from the homes and businesses of every community and from Mainers around the state...in the clothes we wear, the dishes we cook with, the products we buy, in the stuff we toss away, and in the wastewater we send down the drain. We need to deal with them where they start instead of burdening our environment and our farmers with the responsibility and task of trying to stem this Tsunami of a tide. We need to find solutions up stream instead of trying to manage the flood downstream.

***We. Need. More.***

But we will take this start and you must do everything in your power to move this forward.

Because I want to be the Mainer who feeds Mainers. I want to continue to trust the land as much as my neighbours trust me. I want to know that we are living up to our responsibility and making good use of our privilege.

And I don't want to do it alone anymore.

Thank you for your time and attention, for your work as citizen legislators, and I hope for putting the safety and security of our food systems, and those working within it, first.

With Gratitude,  
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