

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: 3/14/22

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

I am an artist, foodsystem organizer, and consultant. I am a co-founder of Waldo County Bounty and Veggies For All, both rural food security organizations.

As a consumer and a food security organizer, I urge you to vote **ought to pass** for LD 2013 - An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination. Farmers who have been unjustly impacted by PFAS need State support NOW and Maine must set an example for other places in the country where this is an emerging issue.

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a family of “man-made chemicals that are stable and persistent in the environment, bioaccumulative, toxic at low concentrations, and easily transferred to groundwater and other media.” Used in the manufacture of consumer goods and firefighting agents— PFAS are linked to severe health issues. PFAS are referred to as “forever chemicals” because they do not degrade in the environment. There is no known way to remediate soils and the persistent nature of these chemicals means that, in places where contamination has occurred, EVERY PART OF THE FOODSYSTEM is touched: water, soil, crops, livestock and their milk/meat/eggs, and even farmers’ bodies.

One farm that has been impacted by this crisis is Songbird Farm in Unity, with which I have a personal connection from the time I was running a food bank farming program, Veggies For All. In the 2014 transition between Green Earth Gardens (the previous owner) and Songbird Farm, both sets of farmers generously worked together to ensure that Veggies For All could grow out just-planted beet and pepper crops for our hunger relief mission, as the older farmer hastened his retirement due to a sudden cancer diagnosis. Neither Green Earth Gardens, nor Songbird, nor the prior owners who spread the sludge knew the risks of doing so. It was permitted by State regulations and okayed by service providers. Knowing that I personally grew produce on that very property that was then specifically targeted toward people utilizing food pantries is a horrifying fact.

When the State issued licenses for the sludge to be spread, it became responsible for the adverse effects of this decision and is beholden to repair the harm in whatever ways are possible. Passing LD 2013 would move some financial supports into action, including: 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.

Putting this safety net in place *also* makes it possible for farms who are contaminated to share their status with the public, which protects consumers. Every farm that is dealing with contamination faces not only personal health harms – but also financial ruin and complete dissolution of their professional reputation. **The State must do all it can to reduce risk to farmers during these moments of revelation so that they are able to be as transparent as possible for public safety.**

Beyond the scope of this bill, but worth mentioning, is the need for the State to hold DuPont, 3M, and other corporations who created and distributed these dangerous toxins liable. Please act on ALL of this.

Sincerely,



Sara Trunzo
Unity, Maine