



Testimony to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
in support of  
LD 2013, *An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State*

15 March 2022

Amy Winston, State Policy Director  
[Amy.Winston@ceimaine.org](mailto:Amy.Winston@ceimaine.org)

Dear Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and Distinguished Members of the JSC on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry: My name is Amy Winston and I live in Edgecomb. As the state policy director, I am testifying on behalf of [Coastal Enterprises, Inc. \(CEI\)](#) in support of LD 2013, *An Act Relating to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Contamination in the State*.

CEI is a community development financial institution (CDFI) founded in 1977 to grow good jobs, environmentally sustainable enterprises, and shared prosperity in Maine and other rural regions by integrating financing, business and industry expertise, and policy solutions. We envision a world in which communities are economically and environmentally healthy, enabling all people, especially those with low incomes, to reach their full potential. As a mission-driven investor, CEI works closely with businesses we finance and advise to address operational, workforce, and environmental challenges, while deepening our impact in key industries, such as farming and food manufacturing, that can contribute to an inclusive and environmentally sustainable economy. Since 2010, CEI has made 87 loans and investments in 56 farm businesses totaling \$9,557,628 dollars, including managing close to \$40 million in federal Cares Act and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds in partnership with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF).<sup>1</sup> We are now working with borrowers to address specific scenarios.

Existing data regarding the extent and impacts of contamination of Maine's farmland by perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are preliminary and represent the tip of an iceberg that is colliding with the resilience of Maine's food system. While the depth of the problem has not yet been determined, early evidence indicates that aggressive intervention is urgent. The Committee may want to add an emergency preamble to this bill. For an economically challenged sector, this situation now presents an environmental catastrophe. The health and solvency of Maine's farm families, who are already vulnerable, are at stake. For Maine, the "heritage" industry on which the state has, in part, pinned its future economic prosperity, by developing the infrastructure needed to expand the Maine food brand through value-added production using Maine-sourced ingredients, will be even more challenged without arable farmland and working farmers to rely on.

In addition to investment in manufacturing equipment and processing facilities that require specialized technical assistance, state resources are needed to support research, education, outreach, and business technical assistance to help mitigate individual, family, enterprise, and community level impacts from PFAS contamination. Funding for research will ensure adequate testing capacity, assess the current uses of PFAS and the viability of soil and water remediation systems, and enable us to understand the cumulative impacts of these devastating chemicals on Maine's agricultural producers and farming communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Including all farm and food related -- i.e., processing and manufacturing -- businesses, our food system portfolio since 2010 is approximately \$35 million in financing.



The purposes of the proposed Fund are outlined in the bill. They include short- and long-term solutions such as the purchase and sale of contaminated land to buy out, relocate, transition, and replace income lost by affected farm businesses, to purchasing equipment and constructing facilities to help farm businesses adapt and stay solvent, or profitable, during the transition. Those continuing to farm will need new revenue streams, through alternative crop systems, solar siting, or other complimentary pursuits. Their health will need long-term monitoring and contaminated farm sites will also require ongoing monitoring to redress and if possible, to abate the health and environmental effects of PFAS.

The legislation fosters collaboration with industry and public-private partnerships that will refine the Fund's purposes and ensure that farms that have relocated or adapted to other uses are profitable during their transition. We entrust details regarding the purposes of the Fund, such as health monitoring, research priorities, short-term financial aid for farmers, ongoing site monitoring, and land acquisition to the Advisory Committee and its working groups or services that are contracted by the DACF to fulfill these purposes. The Advisory Committee is well balanced, with relevant combined expertise from the DACF, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation and Maine's Attorney General. These agencies, working with our federal delegation, will ensure access to federal resources that are available as well. The authority to contract for services ensures the latest science, database management and other tools will be used to develop this infrastructure. Importantly, inclusion of agricultural stakeholders and farm families ensures a voice and vote from the industry is represented. CEI is on the Governor's Energy Office Distributed Generation Stakeholder group, which is responsible for developing a dual-use renewable and solar energy state policy that is compatible with working landscapes. A coordinated approach with that existing initiative will optimize resources for the benefit of Maine farms and energy needs.

In sum, Maine's economic goal to expand its food manufacturing brand, while preserving farmland and farming as an intrinsic part of Maine's past, present and future heritage, demands an immediate and comprehensive response to the PFAS crisis. Families whose health, way of life and livelihoods have been or will be affected by this tragedy must be made whole. The lessons we learn from mapping and remediation of contaminated farmland will inform efforts in other states. CEI is ready to work with state partners, the advisory committee, and stakeholders to ensure the future of farming in Maine.

Thank you for considering this testimony. Please pass LD 2013.