



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Matt Cannon, Sierra Club Maine

Date: April 2, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 780- **An Act Regarding Uncontrolled Hazardous Substance Sites**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Matt Cannon, and I testify on behalf of Sierra Club Maine's over 22,000 members and supporters. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we defend everyone's right to a healthy world, and we support LD 780 in pursuit of that mission.

Protecting our citizens and natural resources from poisoning and the other ill effects of hazardous substances is surely one of the most important responsibilities of our government. But right now, our government's ability to protect us is hampered by concerns that certain chemicals are not properly classified as hazardous under Maine law.

LD 780 will protect the public by allowing the DEP to add new chemicals to the hazardous classification. The chemicals most at issue are PFAS — per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. PFAS are widely used fluorinated chemicals which are highly persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic to people and animals. PFAS are [linked](#) to increased risks of certain cancers, liver and kidney damage, increased risk of thyroid disease, and decreased fertility.

PFAS have been used in certain manufacturing processes, fire-fighting training activities at airports and military bases, and in some food packaging. Indeed, PFAS pollution is now global, with contamination documented in the people and animals of the remote Arctic.

Classifying PFAS as hazardous will allow the state to focus resources on cleaning up the fields, farms and water around Maine now contaminated with this class of

chemicals. Once LD 780 is enacted, the DEP can begin using resources from the Uncontrolled Sites Program to address PFAS contamination.

Please vote 'Ought to Pass' on LD 780 so that the DEP can use its resources to help protect our people and environment from these "forever chemicals."

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Cannon
Sierra Club Maine
Campaign & Policy Associate Director