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Testimony Presenting LD 780 An Act Regarding Uncontrolled Hazardous Substance Sites April 5, 2021

Sen. Brenner, Rep. Tucker and esteemed members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I am Jessica Fay representing the people of House District 66, parts of the towns of Casco, Poland and Raymond. I am pleased to introduce LD 780, "An Act Regarding Uncontrolled Hazardous Substance Sites".

This bill is being proposed again by Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). It modifies the definition of hazardous substance in the Uncontrolled Hazardous Substances Sites law. I am presenting this change proposed by DEP, which incorporates amended language that this Committee passed last session but died when the 129th Legislature adjourned.

The Uncontrolled Sites Law is the State's equivalent of the "superfund law", giving the DEP the authority to respond to hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. It allows the Department to investigate the extent of contaminant releases, determine the risk and mitigate that risk. DEP would like to be able to handle these newly discovered chemicals, and other future chemical threats, in the same way that it has handled emerging contaminants over the past 30 years.

This change will help address recent concerns about health effects from emerging contaminants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as PFAS), and residues remaining after emergency removals of bulk chemicals from clandestine methamphetamine labs by allowing the Department to use its remediation program to appropriately address health risks posed by current and future contaminants.

PFAS have been widely used in commerce and they are highly persistent, move further and faster through the environment than other contaminants and present risk at relatively low concentrations. Similarly, EPA research suggests that chemical and drug residuals that remain after emergency responses at illegal drug labs pose a significant risk warranting remedial action.

I will let the Department answer any questions you might have about this legislation and why it is part of addressing the PFAS issue, meth labs and future chemical contamination threats that we might not yet understand.

I thank the committee for your attention and look forward to working on this issue with all of you.