Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 960 – *An Act to Require Reporting of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, PFAS, in Products and of Discharges of Firefighting Foam Containing PFAS*
April 5, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Environment and Natural Resource Committee, my name is Neal Goldberg, and I am providing testimony neither for nor against LD 960 on behalf of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee.

Reporting use of the group of chemicals collectively referred to as PFAS in firefighting agents like PFAS containing foams is important. PFAS containing firefighting foams are harmful to water quality and the health of firefighters using these agents. The Association supports the reporting requirements of manufactures of products with intentionally added PFAS substances. The state needs to know which products contain PFAS in order to appropriately inform and educate those discharging firefighting foams.

At the municipal level, fire departments are already keeping a record of instances when PFAS containing firefighting foams are discharged. Codifying an additional reporting requirement for these municipal departments will be time consuming to the primarily volunteer based firefighting community. There is also concern the additional reporting requirements for manufacturers would make these property and life-saving firefighting foams more expensive for departments.

The Association is also uncertain about what implications this bill has on municipally owned wastewater treatment plants. If a PFAS containing firefighting foam is discharged close to a water source that abuts or runs through many municipalities then all nearby wastewater treatment plants will be implicated. These plants will have to conduct more water quality tests if PFAS discharge reporting increases. Instead, it might be more appropriate to find alternative firefighting agents other than PFAS containing foams.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important environmental issue.