



Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Director of Advocacy, Defend Our Health  
In Support of LD 780, “An Act Regarding Uncontrolled Hazardous Substance Sites”  
Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
April 5, 2021

Good Morning, Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the director of advocacy for Defend Our Health, formerly the Environmental Health Strategy Center. Defend Our Health’s mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes and products that are toxic-free and climate friendly. I am here to testify in support of LD 780, “An Act Regarding Uncontrolled Hazardous Substance Sites”.

We are all well aware of the story of Fred Stone and his dairy farm and how his livelihood ruined by PFAS contamination. As a result of state-sanctioned spreading of industrial and municipal sludge, Fred Stone’s land is now practically worthless. And Fred Stone is not the only farmer or landowner impacted. We have all seen the recent stories about the Tozier farm, along with at least 54 wells in properties surrounding the farm in the Fairfield area, that have been contaminated with toxic PFAS.

Adding insult to injury, DEP is unable to access existing state resources to address the contamination found on these contaminated sites since PFAS are not amongst the chemicals listed as eligible under the uncontrolled sites program. As a result, the chemicals from Fred’s land likely continue to leach into the aquifer and likely into the Kennebunk River that flows next to his farm. Additionally, PFAS contamination on the Tozier farm likely continues to leach from the soil into the surrounding areas. The state currently has no authority to access funds that could be used to plan for remediation and cleanup.

LD 780 is necessary to provide DEP with the flexibility to address not only the Stoneridge Farm, Tozier Farm and Fairfield wells situations, but others that will surely arise. DEP has identified approximately 500 other sites across the state that received sludge similar to Stoneridge and the Tozier farms. Only a handful have been tested. Given the ubiquity of PFAS use, it is likely more sites will be found. This will also allow DEP to tackle the next PFAS or other emerging threat that will inevitably arise.

Mainers deserve to have a DEP that is empowered to quickly identify and respond to hazardous substances found, both to limit further contamination and to begin the process of holding responsible parties accountable for their actions. Under the current Maine statute, we have to wait for the federal government to identify hazardous substances. As Governor Mills said in her



2020 State of the State “We are not Washington. We are Maine”. We should not have to wait for Washington to act to protect our communities from hazardous substances. LD 780 would allow DEP to make these determinations using the same definitions the Federal Government does without waiting for Washington.

Defend Our Health urges you to unanimously vote “ought to pass” on LD 780