

Fred Brancato
Portland

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Elders for Future Generations, a network of 170 older people concerned about public policies that will impact the lives of children and their families now and for generations to come.

We urge your vote for the passage of LD 1532, as amended and introduced at Monday's hearing by Representative Victoria Morales.

The excellent, highly informed testimony of Representative Morales says it all, and we hope you will make the compassionate, common sense decision to support it in its entirety. The mandates in the bill are reasonable and absolutely necessary to address the health and quality of life issues at stake for residents in South Portland living in communities permeated by 120 oil storage tanks spewing toxic fumes into the atmosphere.

Just one trip to the Kaler Elementary School, which has a cluster of tanks virtually in its back yard, can show the importance of frequent "fence line" monitoring of toxic fumes engulfing the atmosphere around it and nearby homes. We would call your attention to the photo in Representative Morales' testimony which shows the Kaler School playground abutted by the massive tanks.

It is such a reasonable request to mandate testing and compliance with EPA's established guidelines. Frankly, DEP and the oil companies approach to monitoring air quality and holding tank farm owners accountable is unconscionable. DEP's objection to the fence line testing requirements of LD 1532 makes us wonder: What is there to hide? DEP's claim that this requirement of the bill is too costly is spurious. There is ample evidence that it is not too costly. If DEP and the oil companies think it is, where are the guiding values? What is a person's health and life worth?

It is dismaying that the air quality conditions caused by an extraordinary number of tanks concentrated in the neighborhoods of South Portland, where schools, homes, parks, a community center and businesses are located, have been allowed to continue for so long.

We urge you to prevent this situation from continuing by supporting LD 1532.

Thank you.

Fred Brancato, on behalf of Elders for Future Generations

50 Gray Street
Portland, ME 04102
opus4fred@gmail.com
(207) 671-9776