

May 3, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

My name is Janice M Cardoza. I am a resident of Norway, Maine and I attend the First Universalist Church of Norway. I am writing as a member of MUUSAN, (Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network).

I am writing in support of **LD 1503 An Act to Stop Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Pollution.**

PFAs are labeled “forever chemicals” because they don’t break down and remain in the environment essentially forever, unless they are cleaned up. They have been found from Fairfield, Maine to Mt. Everest.

PFAs are used in thousands of everyday products including cookware, clothing, food packaging, textiles, tents and personal care products. Most of these uses have safer alternatives. PFAs pose significant health risks, impact the immune system weakening the response to vaccines and cause some types of cancer. I had and was treated for breast cancer nine years ago. The cause of my cancer is unknown. Could it have been from exposure to PFAs in drinking water or from using a non-stick pan to cook my breakfast? I will never know. But I do know that I do not want cancer again nor do I wish anyone else to have it. Products made with PFAs may be cheaper to manufacture and purchase but the cost of healthcare and to the lives of people and animals is high.

Low-income, rural, and tribal communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted and more susceptible to the health and financial impacts of PFA contamination. Infrastructure, such as water supply / treatment, is often neglected in poorer communities. Toxic dumping areas are often sited in low-income areas as the people do not have the means to fight against them.

As a Unitarian Universalist, I am motivated by the principles of my faith: The inherent worth and dignity of every person and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and I urge the committee to support LD 1503.