



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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May 3, 2021

*Testimony of Rep. Lori K. Gramlich presenting*

## **LD 1505, An Act To Restrict the Use of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances in Firefighting Foam**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources*

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, I am Lori Gramlich, Representative for House District 13, which is the town of Old Orchard Beach. I am pleased to present **LD 1505, An Act To Restrict the Use of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances in Firefighting Foam.**

We are all well aware of the toxicity of PFAS, also known as “forever chemicals.” Exposure to these toxic chemicals has been associated with certain types of cancers, interference with our immune system responses, lowering a woman’s chances of getting pregnant, and neurodevelopmental issues and delays in children. Assuring that we are doing everything we can to eliminate the use of PFAS is a matter of public health. As we all have heard, PFAS have contaminated our water and soil across our state, harming our environment and contaminating farmland and drinking water.

PFAS are referred to as forever chemicals simply because they do not break down. They remain in our environment forever and are in thousands of everyday products, including cookware, clothing, food packaging, textiles and car seats, to name a few. PFAS is also found in the foam used by firefighters.

LD 1505 is intended to address this issue. It would prohibit PFAS in firefighting foam, effective January 1, 2022. Additionally, manufacturing, selling and distributing foam with PFAS would be prohibited effective January 1, 2022. Further, this bill requires that the Department of Environmental Protection be notified in the event that firefighting foam with PFAS is discharged into coastal or inland waters within the State of Maine.

In our ongoing efforts to protect our drinking water in Maine, LD 1505 requires the Department of Environmental Protection to collaborate with the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Maine Emergency Management Agency and other interested parties to develop a framework for the collection and safe storage of firefighting and fire-suppressing foam which would be prohibited by this bill and would require safe disposal of such foam.

Finally, the Department would be required to submit a report including the framework for safe storage and collection to this committee by March 31, 2022.

LD 1505 is intended to end the use of PFAS in firefighting foam and is a reasonable step in protecting our health and our environment.

I would never want to do anything that would inhibit the ability of our firefighters to extinguish fires. However, studies have shown that firefighters are more likely to have PFAS in their blood stream. And again, we are painfully aware of the adverse health consequences of this toxic chemical. We also know that foam containing these harmful toxins gets into our environment and into our water supply. And we know that PFAS-free firefighting foam is available on the market and that these alternatives are an effective product in combating fires.

I urge you to vote unanimously for LD 1505. Thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions for you.