

Testimony in support of LD 1503
Hon. Henry Ingwersen

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Esteemed members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee;

I am the Honorable Henry Ingwersen from Arundel, Maine, and I am testifying in support of *LD 1503, An Act to Stop Perfluoroalkyl and Perfluoroalkyl Substances Pollution*.

Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are aptly called “forever chemicals” because of their combined abilities to biopersistent (not break down) and to bioaccumulate (build up in concentration over time). Research has proven that PFAS pose significant health risks, particularly to pregnant women and children. PFAS increase the risk of certain cancers, interfere with immune system responses, may lower a woman’s chance of getting pregnant, and are associated with neurodevelopmental issues.

We are just beginning to get a sense of how frighteningly widespread PFAS contamination likely is in Maine. We are also just beginning to take action with bills this session in at least three separate committees that deal with further identification of toxic sites, setting statewide appropriate contaminant levels, and allowing victims of PFAS contamination their fair day in court. LD 1503, however, is the most important PFAS legislation we can pass because it stops PFAS contamination at the source. It does this in two ways:

1 - LD 1503 requires manufacturers to disclose PFAS use. We Mainers currently have no choice whether we want PFAS in our house, on our rugs, in our cookware, on our clothing, in our food and in our water. It is currently impossible for us to shop our way out of this problem because we don’t know what products have PFAS in them. By requiring manufacturers to disclose PFAS in their products, you legislators are empowering consumers to decide whether or not they want PFAS in the things they purchase. I know that most Mainers would choose a safer alternative product if it were available.

2 - LD 1503 begins phasing out the use of PFAS in non-essential products by banning the use of PFAS in carpets, rugs, and fabric treatments by 2023, something that major manufacturers are already doing voluntarily. If you pass this bill it will also grant authority to the DEP to ban the use of PFAS in other products where alternatives are available. Effective in 2030, this bill prohibits the sale of products containing intentionally added PFAS unless the DEP has specifically designated the use of PFAS as currently unavoidable.

I happen to live 2 miles down the road from Stoneridge Farm in Arundel, which you all know about by now, and I can tell you many of us in the neighborhood are worried and frightened. We don't want this poison in our houses, our gardens, or in our water. LD 1503 empowers us as consumers to protect our water and our land so that hopefully my grandchildren or maybe my grandchildren's children can begin to live in a safer world.

Thank you for your consideration and as always, for the valuable service you all give to the citizens of Maine.