Testimony before the
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Sean Mahoney
Conservation Law Foundation
May 3, 2021

Re: LD 1505 – An Act To Restrict the Use of Perflouroakyl and Polyflouroakyl Substances in Firefighting Foam

Good morning Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sean Mahoney, Executive Vice President for Conservation Law Foundation, and I am here to testify in support of An Act to Restrict the Use of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroakyl Substances in Firefighting Foam. CLF uses the law, science, and economics to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the climate crisis here in Maine and across New England.

I won't repeat my testimony provided earlier today in support of another PFAS related bill, LD 1503, that sets forth the very real harm that PFAS chemicals pose to Mainers and Maine's environment. LD 1505 is a similar bill with a specific focus on phasing out the use of PFAS in firefighting foams. Specifically, LD 1505 will prohibit the use of PFAS in firefighting foam unless required by the federal government. LD 1505 will also prohibit the use of such firefighting foam during testing unless all the foam is collected for disposal, require manufacturers to buy back firefighting foam from local fire departments and require that any discharge of the firefighting foam into coastal or inland waters report that information to the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Department of Defense has identified 401 military sites that are contaminated from PFAS, much of that due to the discharge of firefighting foam containing PFAS.[1] Four of those sites are in Maine - Brunswick, Bangor, Cutler and Gilead.[2] Banning the use of PFAS in firefighting foam is a step already taken by a number of states, including New Hampshire, California, Colorado,

[1] Sullivan, M. (2018, March). Addressing Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA). Retrieved April 27, 2021, from https://web.archive.org/web/20210325142958/https://www.denix.osd.mil/derp/home/documents/pfos-pfoa-briefing-to-the-hasc/

[2] Ewg. (n.d.). Interactive map: PFAS CONTAMINATION Crisis: New data Show 2,337 sites in 49 states. Retrieved April 27, 2021, from https://www.ewg.org/interactive-maps/pfas_contamination/

Michigan, New York, and Washington[3] and PFAS-free firefighting foams are readily available.[4] Airports, military bases and other industrial sites around the world have moved away from using PFAS-containing firefighting foam with no reported issues.[5]

Maine is in the midst of a PFAS crisis and LD 1505 is a means to remove one cause of that crisis, protecting the health of those who fight fires as well as the general public's health. Conservation Law Foundation urges you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1505.

Thank you

[3] See "Adopted Policy" section of: Safer States. "PFAS." Available at http://www.saferstates.org/toxic-chemicals/pfas/ (accessed 4-13-2021).
[4] IPEN 2019/Stockholm Convention COP-9 White Paper, The Global PFAS Problem: Fluorine-Free Alternatives As Solutions. https://ipen.org/sites/default/files/documents/the_global_pfas_problem-v1_5_final_18_april.pdf
[5] Ross, I., PhD. (2019, August 01). Is the downfall of afff a precursor to long term environmental liabilities? Retrieved April 26, 2021, from https://www.internationalairportreview.com/article/98795/fire-fighting-foam-chemicals-water/