

To: Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Committee for Environment and Natural Resources

From: Bradley Sawyer, Director of Government Affairs

Date: May 3, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D 1505, An Act To Restrict the Use of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances in Firefighting Foam

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Committee for Environment and Natural Resources, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Brad Sawyer, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for the Maine Rural Water Association.

MRWA submitted testimony in support of L.D. 960, An Act To Require Reporting of Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, PFAS, in Products and of Discharges of Firefighting Foam Containing PFAS, and supports this legislation for the same reason. Source reduction is the best-known way to reduce future issues relating to this class of chemicals and the requirements in L.D. 1505 would help with that goal. As this committee knows, treating PFAS is an expensive proposition that creates other issues such as the chemical laden residuals that require disposal. Water and wastewater utilities are burdened with undertaking this task despite not being responsible for the creation or use of these chemicals.

Although many water utilities in the state were founded to play a role in fire protection; our members are not experts in firefighting. We respect that when lives are at stake firefighters want the absolute best tools at their disposal. This bill recognizes regulations that necessitate AFFF in certain products while moving the state away from such frequent use.

Rural Water also supports the reporting provision in this bill regarding discharges of aqueous film-forming foam. It should be noted that some departments across the state currently notify water utilities when they discharge near water resources. We appreciate that cooperation and support codifying that practice in state law. If PFAS from AFFF can be stopped before entering water sources, it may mean less treatment is necessary at the utility level. MRWA supports educating users of AFFF on how to identify public and private sources of water to help them fully understand where the foam is being sprayed and the implications it may have in the future.

This is a targeted bill that adds one piece of the puzzle to the goal of PFAS elimination. Rural Water urges you to support this legislation and start the trend of source reduction that will lead to a cleaner future for all Maine people. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at Bradley.Sawyer@MaineRWA.org or 207-737-9014.