

5/5/2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, Members of the Committee,

We are writing on behalf of Don't Waste ME in support of LD 1600: "An Act to Investigate Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater".

Don't Waste ME is an organization of Maine citizens who are concerned about waste handling, disposal, and management practices within our state. We are particularly concerned with the contamination of our lands and waterways as a result of these practices. As such, we are grateful for the opportunity to offer comments in support of this proposed bill.

We strongly believe that any product being spread on land and/or near groundwater in Maine should be thoroughly tested for the presence of these harmful chemicals before such use, and that areas where this process has already occurred need to be tested as well.

We know that the previous use of these products has decimated some Maine farmers and landowners and want to uncover the extent of the damage that has been done.

PFAS is also ending up in wastewater and in our rivers through leachate from landfills. This leachate is minimally tested before it is sent to wastewater treatment facilities for processing. Once processed, PFAS can end up in sludge or be discharged into our rivers, causing additional contamination. To the best of our knowledge, such discharges are currently tested for Ph, bio-chemical oxygen demand, total suspended solids, ammonia, zinc, terpinol, benzoic acid, para-cresol, phenol, and mercury. These chemicals are typically the result of the paper-making process. Note that other hazardous items such as lead and the Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (known as "forever" chemicals), which come from landfill leachate are not on the list. We emphatically support the expanded testing of this leachate as addressed in this bill.

This contamination places a burden on tribal communities who are particularly dependent upon the rivers for their way of life, especially in regards to sustenance fishing and access to clean water. Substantial progress has been made in cleaning up Maine's waters; continued discharges of these contaminants into our rivers threatens to undo that progress.

We appreciate your attention to these matters and urge you to support this proposed bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Lippincott, Chair, Don't Waste ME