

Testimony in support of LD 1600: “An Act to Investigate Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater”.

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, Members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is John Banks and I am a citizen of the Penobscot Nation and my tribes Director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), a position I’ve held since 1980.

One of my duties as the Penobscot Nation DNR Director involves the ecological restoration, and protection, of the indigenous lands and waters of the tribes’ homelands, which includes the Penobscot River Watershed. Recent accomplishments include the 60+ million dollar investment in the restoration of the native fish species through the Penobscot River Restoration Project while increasing hydropower generation. A true win/win project.

The Penobscot Nation has become concerned about the possible impacts of PFAS and other chemicals on the ecological integrity of the Penobscot River below the Nine Dragons paper mill in Old Town. The leachate from the Juniper Ridge Landfill is trucked to the Nine Dragons paper mill and released into the river with minimal treatment. This landfill leachate is derived from the run-off of the Juniper Ridge Landfill which accepts thousands of tons of wastes, some of which originates beyond Maine’s borders. I believe a first step to begin to understand the impacts of these forever chemicals is to initiate a robust testing regime at the site of the landfill as well as in-stream testing below the mill.. A testing location just downstream of the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Shawmut on the Kennebec River, where landfill leachate is discharged, revealed high levels of PFAS in recent DEP tests. Testing downriver from the ND paper mill in Old Town, where leachate from the Juniper Ridge Landfill is sent, would likely show the same results.

Please support LD 1600.

John Banks
Director of Natural Resources
Penobscot Nation
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