

Sam Bullard  
Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine

Hello Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sam Bullard, she/they pronouns, and I am here as a resident of Bangor and the Co-Program Director of the Peace & Justice Center of Eastern Maine. Today I am testifying in support of LD 1600 because I believe in protecting Maine's waterways from mistreatment.

In my area of Maine, we have all been hurt witnessing the blatant pollution of our lands and waters by companies such as Juniper Ridge Landfill, Nine Dragons Paper Mill. Every day countless gallons of leachate containing minimally tested PFAS's are permitted by the government's current regulations to be dumped straight into the Penobscot River. The landfill continues to take toxic waste from other places outside Maine that are not even permitted to be dumped in their places of origin. We are allowing our state's natural integrity to be violated by out of state interests purely out of convenience for them and a disregard for our own lands. At the very least, our state could do better by enacting legislation that further protects our ecosystems from harmful chemicals.

This issue also lives at the heart of Maine's community; so much of Maine is made up of our beautiful rivers, lakes, and other natural resources. These are all incredibly important to the Wabanaki people, who have always been stewards and protectors of the land. With the current levels of pollution permitted in our waters, we are seeing what was once clean drinking and fishing waters turn into toxic landscapes slowly poisoning our wildlife and our communities who depend on these waterways. For far too long the colonial mindset has desecrated and polluted vital parts of ourselves and the world we live in. Allowing such levels of waste into our ecosystems is an attack on the Penobscot Nation, and on all of our community.

It is for these reasons I am in support of LD 1600. I urge you all to pass this bill so that we can work together to protect and uphold the integrity of our state's ecosystem.