



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources

From: Jonathan Fulford, Sierra Club Maine

Date: May 6, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 1600 **An Act To Investigate Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. I am Jonathan Fulford, and I write on behalf of Sierra Club Maine's over 20,000 members and supporters. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we defend everyone's right to a healthy world, and we strongly support L.D. 1600 in our pursuit of that mission.

So-called "forever chemicals," toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) pose significant health risks, increasing the risk of certain cancers, interfere with immune system responses, and may lower a woman's chance of getting pregnant. Many PFAS do not break down and remain in the environment practically forever unless cleaned up. PFAS have contaminated water and soil across the state, harming our environment and contaminating farmland and drinking water. Low income communities, communities of color, and tribal and rural communities are disproportionately impacted and more susceptible to health and financial impacts of PFAS contamination.

Maine is dealing with a PFAS contamination crisis. There are at least two dairy farms and over 100 wells that have been contaminated across Maine. The DEP has a list of over 700 sites where industrial and sewer sludge has been spread. In order to get a full sense of the contamination, we need to get the sites tested. Testing requires funding, and this bill would establish the Land Application Contaminant Monitoring Fund. It will be funded by a \$10 per ton fee assessed on any disposal of septage, industrial sludge, municipal sludge, bioash, wood ash and other residuals.

PFAS is also ending up in wastewater and in our rivers through leachate from landfills. This leachate, including leachate shipped in from out of state, 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.

This contamination places a particular burden on tribal communities who are particularly dependent upon the rivers for their way of life, especially as it pertains to sustenance

fishing and clean water.

We urge Ought to Pass for L.D. 1600.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Fulford
Legislative Team Chair
Sierra Club Maine