

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, Members of the Committee,

I'm writing in support of LD 1600: "An Act to Investigate Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Contamination of Land and Groundwater".

We know that these "forever chemicals" are hazardous, and the land spreading of sludge containing these toxins has contaminated farms and other land within our state, to the point where a dairy farm in Maine had to stop selling its milk. It makes complete sense to test all soils and groundwater in areas that have been licensed or permitted to apply residuals in the state. Protecting the health and welfare of Maine citizens needs to be a priority, and this proposed bill provides a reasonable means way of offering that protection.

Additionally, the leachate produced by landfills in the state likely contain measurable amounts of these chemicals. This leachate is currently "treated" at paper mill wastewater treatment plants and then released into major Maine waterways. The wastewater discharges into our rivers are tested for a handful of papermaking-process residues, but it is not tested for landfill operation residues before discharge.

Maine has made great progress in cleaning up our waterways; we need to know what is now being discharged into our rivers as a result of landfill leachate wastewater treatment. We must prevent the release of these contaminants from reversing the progress we have made.

The testing location just downstream of the Waste Water Treatment Plant in Shawmut on the Kennebec where the majority of the current Waste Management landfill leachate is discharged was the site of the highest 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.

These discharges place 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 unpolluted water, and to others who depend on clean waters for food and recreation.

I appreciate your attention to these matters and hope that you will fully support this bill.

Sincerely,

Charles Leithiser
Old Town, ME