

Good morning, Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the joint Standing Committee of Environment & Natural Resources. My name is Jim Buckle, co-owner of The Buckle Farm in Unity. We are a certified organic fruit and vegetable farm that sells to wholesale markets in Maine.

I urge this committee to **OPPOSE LD 1960**. I am very thankful for the Legislature's thoughtful and measured efforts to address Maine's PFAS contamination crisis, including mandating that manufacturers must report on the presence of PFAS in their products and replace PFAS with safer alternatives by 2030. I believe that this gives more transparency to the food system and provides consumers with more assurance of food safety.

By extending or removing the deadline for these disclosures and changes, we are extending the continued contamination of farmland in the State of Maine. In the spring of 2021, my wife and I tested the well water on our farm and discovered that it contained PFAS chemical levels that exceeded acceptable drinking standards. This well is used to water our seedlings, irrigate our crops, wash our produce, and is our household source of water. This discovery caused our farm's plan for that season and the next two to become a financial and logistical nightmare. Fortunately, we have an excellent and supportive Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Maine Farmland Trust and The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Assoc. Without their assistance, as well as the flexibility and support of our customers we would not be in business today. I feel fortunate that we were able to continue farming today, however, not all my colleagues are as fortunate. In an already challenging business, the contamination of our water and soil should not be a daily concern for farmers in Maine, yet it is. Why give the chemical companies a pass on being responsible vendors of pesticides?

We should not allow chemical companies to continue to choose profit over the health of the public. Five years is more than adequate time for these corporations to discover alternative ingredients for their products and conduct the disclosures necessary to continue to have the privilege to conduct business in the State of Maine.

Thank you,

Jim Buckle
Unity, Maine