



Slingshot

53 Exchange Street, #200
Portland, ME 04101
slingshot.org

Testimony in Support of LD 132

An Act to Require Health Insurance Carriers to Provide Coverage for Blood Testing for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

Dana Colihan, Co-Executive Director | March 28th, 2023

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, & Financial Services Committee,

I am submitting testimony in support of LD 132, an Act to Require Health Insurance Carriers to Provide Coverage for Blood Testing for Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances. Slingshot envisions a world where everyone can live, work, and play in communities that are safe, healthy, and sustainable. We envision a PFAS-free world where we address the harms of PFAS contamination, and we do everything we can to address the horrific impact of these chemicals on our communities and environment—which is why we must pass LD132.

Whether your community is facing polluted water, a leaking landfill or air pollution from oil tanks in your backyard, you deserve to know the facts, make your voice heard, and create the changes you want to see. Slingshot is an environmental justice organization, working alongside communities most impacted by environmental health threats to take aim at polluters and build community power.

We are currently facing one of the largest water contamination crises of our time. Communities around the country are discovering daily that their water is polluted with per and polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS. PFAS are a toxic, man-made class of chemicals, commonly known as “forever chemicals,” which were created by chemical companies for things like non-stick coating or fire fighting foam. However, PFAS have been linked to serious health impacts like kidney cancer, birth abnormalities, and more.

We are honored to co-facilitate the National PFAS Contamination Coalition, which is composed of 30 community groups from across the country (including Maine) that are directly impacted by PFAS contamination. The coalition is fighting for a world where people are not exposed to any PFAS, where the environment and public health are protected, where there is justice for the victims of PFAS exposure, and where laws and regulations prevent contamination disasters like this from happening again. From this work, we have witnessed the harm PFAS have on our bodies, families, and environment.

To move towards justice for the victims of PFAS exposure, we must be able to provide medical monitoring for Mainers who have been exposed to this contamination. Currently, treatment is centered around understanding a patient's level of exposure to PFAS. Right now the best way

to know the extent of one's exposure is through blood serum testing, as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences and Engineering and Medicine (NASEM).

However, blood tests for PFAS contamination are expensive— costing hundreds of dollars. The cost for understanding one's exposure or being able to receive the needed treatment and care should also not fall onto the shoulders of Mainers exposed to PFAS contamination.

It is critical that we start obtaining this critical information as soon as possible, and we need to make it accessible to impacted communities and town officials in a timely, and digestible manner.

We ask you to be decisive in protecting the people of the state of Maine, and listen to the voices of residents most severely impacted by PFAS Contamination by supporting LD 132. Our families and communities exposed to PFAS contamination should be able to afford to get their blood tested. Thank you.