

Testimony IN SUPPORT OF HB 1275
AN ACT relative to the effects of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances on agriculture

Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Agriculture

Submitted by

Jacquelyn Elliott on behalf of

Don't Waste Maine | February 10, 2026

Chair Representative Aron, Vice Chair Representative Barbour and Honorable Members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Agriculture:

My name is Jackie Elliott. I am a native Granite Stater where I lived most of my life and raised my family before retiring to Waterboro, Maine in 2010 – a state I have loved since childhood. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 1275 AN ACT relative to the effects of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances on agriculture**. For several years I have worked as a member of Don't Waste Maine (DWME)¹ advocating for those unjustly and harmfully impacted by the operations of the state-owned Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town. This testimony is offered in behalf of DWME.

DWME is a citizens' group working together with legislators and regulators to establish resource management practices that reduce the volume and toxicity of waste generated; conserve and reuse resources beneficially; share benefits and burdens of outcomes equitably; promote environmental justice and the right to live safely in our communities; and provide fulsome and transparent public participation in policy and licensing decisions.

For three decades I have advocated for public and environmental health particularly as they relate to materials and waste management operations. That work initiated as a citizen of Claremont with efforts focused on the Wheelabrator waste incinerator, that for more than two decades, poured dangerous pollution across the community and surrounding area and threatened a source of Claremont's drinking water with the ash landfill in neighboring Newport.

Every citizen has the right to live in a safe community and enjoy a quality of life protected by decision makers from undue harm of waste disposal methods. Decisions should be rooted in scientific knowledge that accommodates precaution weighted with known harms and those that may be revealed in the future; and framed by commonly-held values and a morality that does not sacrifice the well-being of one community for another and holds accountable those responsible for the harm they create.

¹ <https://dontwasteme.wordpress.com/>

My work in New Hampshire supported efforts of those raising the alarm² and pushing for regulators to cease the practice of spreading waste water treatment biosolids (sludge) on New Hampshire's farmland.³ That was long before recognition of the ubiquitous contamination of wildlife and human bodies, air, water, and soil with **per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) designated as forever chemicals. A class of chemicals so identified because of their propensity to persist and to resist breakdown. These chemicals are demonstrating a risk to public health that includes increases in cholesterol levels (PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFDA); lower antibody response to some vaccines (PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFDA); changes in liver enzymes (PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS); pregnancy-induced hypertension and preeclampsia (PFOA, PFOS); decreases in birth weight (PFOA, PFOS); and kidney and testicular cancer (PFOA).**⁴

Context for Protecting Farmlands from Spreading Sludge

New Hampshire is experiencing the dreadful aftermath from operations at Saint-Gobain and the onslaught from PFAS pollution⁵ of its citizens and water supplies. It was equally horrifying to see the PFAS nightmare unfold in the state that is now my home. **That tragedy is linked to years of spreading sludge⁶ on farmland for use as fertilizer.** It has been inspiring to witness those whose lives have been devastated by this toxic pollution, in New Hampshire and Maine, persist to push decision makers to respond and address the realities with policies that protect and provide a framework of precaution. Maine has sought to provide financial⁷ support for those who have been harmed. The state is providing leadership in the response, and that began in part with the ban⁸ on land-spreading of sludge. The process of countering the damage is not without its challenges, however.⁹ Everything being experienced points to the need to work on the front end of the problem as technological attempts to mitigate¹⁰ the pollution on the back end are so far unreliable, unavailable to function successfully to scale, and prohibitively

² October 2001, Parnell, Harris K., Toxic Sludge In Our Communities: Threatening Public Health And Our Farmlands: <https://communityactionworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Toxic-Sludge-in-Our-Communities-Threatening-Public-Health-and-Our-Farmlands-2001.pdf>

³ Sludge Victims: Voices from the Field, https://www.sludgenews.org/resources/documents/Shields_NS.pdf

⁴ ATSDR Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and Your Health: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/about/health-effects.html>

⁵ Saint-Gobain Site Investigation History: <https://www.pfas.des.nh.gov/pfas-occurrences/saint-gobain-performance-plastics/site-investigation-history>

⁶ October 23, 2022, Schaufli, Marina, *A Spreading Problem: How PFAS got into soils and food systems*, The Maine Monitor: <https://themainemonitor.org/a-spreading-problem-how-pfas-got-into-soils-and-food-systems/>

⁷ <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ag/pfas/pfas-fund.shtml>

⁸ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?item=8&paper=HP1417&snum=130>

⁹ November 24, 2025, Cromwell, Sydney, *Maine Was First to Ban Spreading PFAS Contaminated Sludge on Farmland. Now Sludge Is Filling Up Landfills*, Inside Climate News: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/24112025/maine-landfill-pfas-contamination/>

¹⁰ June 2025, PFAS Contamination and Mitigation: A Comprehensive analysis of research trends and global contributions: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666016425000349>

expensive. Calls to regulate PFAS as a class ¹¹of toxic chemicals, and not as one-offs, are founded in sound research and holding producers of PFAS accountable to the harm they have induced is integral to satisfactory solutions.

HB 1275 is an opportunity for New Hampshire to take important steps to prevent further harm to public health, the environment, our farmlands and food supply from PFAS and other persistent toxics through the exposure pathway of land application of biosolids. As well, it is an opportunity to institute a mechanism to compensate for harms incurred. Thank you for considering these comments and DWME requests the Committee vote **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Jackie Elliott for DWME

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¹¹ July 22, 2021, Kwiatkowski, Carol F. et al, Scientific Basis for Managing PFAS as a Chemical Class:
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8297807/>