Read about the amazing victories in the Maine Legislature this year to protect public health!

We worked with legislators on both sides of the aisle on bills that passed with overwhelming, and in most cases unanimous, support. The new laws passed now protect Maine’s children and families from the toxic chemical PFAS and toxins in drinking water, including lead and arsenic.
PROTECTING MAINE’S DRINKING WATER

All Mainers, regardless of socioeconomic status, deserve access to clean and safe drinking water. To help make this a reality, Defend Our Health Action worked hard this session on three bills that increased access to safe drinking water for Mainers:

**LD 129**
Wells across the state have been contaminated by toxic chemicals known as PFAS. Prior to this bill, there was no legal limit on PFAS contamination in drinking water and there was no requirement for testing. LD 129 sets a strict, health protective standard for 6 different types of PFAS and requires testing of public water supplies as well as water supplies that service schools and daycares.

**LD 206**
Many children may be exposed to lead through drinking water at school as result of old pipes in school buildings. LD 206 protects Maine children by setting a more health protective maximum level allowed for lead in school drinking water and requires schools to test and disclose those results to parents.

**LD 1570**
Over 50% of Mainers get their drinking water from residential wells. Maine’s unique geology means as many as 1 in 6 of those have too much arsenic in their water. LD 1570 requires the Maine CDC to do outreach to low-income residential well owners and help them get their wells tested for free. It also requires that landlords test their wells for arsenic and disclose those test results to their tenants.
PROTECTING MAINERS FROM PFAS

Maine is in the midst of a PFAS contamination crisis. Dairy farmers, like the families that own Stoneridge Farm and Tozier Farm, have seen their livelihoods destroyed due to PFAS contamination. Additionally, more than 160 wells for neighbors surrounding the Tozier Farm in the Fairfield, Benton, and Unity Township areas have been contaminated with toxic PFAS. Wells in Presque Isle, Houlton, and Trenton, are also contaminated with PFAS.

Defend Our Health worked hard with legislative champions to pass law that protect all Mainers from further PFAS contamination and provide them with avenues to seek redress for the damage done to their land and livelihoods:

**LD 363**
Prior to this bill, it was very difficult for landowners in Maine to sue for contamination because they were required to file suit shortly after contamination occurred, even if the problems weren’t discovered until years later. This bill now allows those that are impacted by PFAS contamination the ability to seek compensation within six years from the discovery of the contamination.

**LD 1503**
One of the most consequential bills in the 130th legislative session, LD 1503 is a significant step forward for Maine and provides a national model for policymakers to eliminate all but the “essential” uses of PFAS in products. It also requires manufacturers to disclose the use of PFAS in products to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This bill flips the script on chemical policy as we know it, putting the onus on proving the specific need for these toxic chemicals on the manufacturers, as opposed to advocates and legislators trying to ban specific uses, and it sets a precedent for other states to follow suit.

**LD 1505**
PFAS containing firefighting foam is responsible for contamination of soil and water across the state and exposes our firefighters to toxic chemicals. LD 1505 phases out PFAS foams, except for limited uses required by federal law. Maine now joins a diverse range of states that are protecting the health of firefighters who have a much higher risk of cancer due to exposure to PFAS and other toxic chemicals.

**LD 1541**
In Maine’s landmark legislation to transfer the cost of disposing of packaging waste from taxpayers to manufacturers, we worked with our coalition partners to provide incentives for eliminating toxic chemicals, like phthalates and PFAS, by charging higher fees for their disposal.

**LD 1600**
Over the past 40 plus years, potentially contaminated industrial and municipal sewer sludge has been used as fertilizer across Maine. The DEP has a list of over 500 sites across Maine where material similar to that which contaminated the Stoneridge and Tozier farms was used. LD 1600 requires the state to systematically test both soil and groundwater at these sites for PFAS contamination. This law will protect public health by prioritizing testing of sludge and septage spreading sites that have the potential to contaminate water and food consumed by Mainers, and also sets a precedent for other states to begin requiring testing as well.
Defend Our Health Action (formerly Prevent Harm) is the 501(c)4 advocacy partner of Defend Our Health, which has fought since 2002 for a toxic-free tomorrow. We build coalitions, stand with the grassroots, and lead campaigns to win positive change in government and communities in Maine and across the country.

Please consider a contribution to our work.

Thank you, Legislators.

Rep. Lori Gramlich (D-Old Orchard Beach) took on PFAS as a priority issue this session and was the lead sponsor on all three PFAS bills, LD 1503, 1505, and 1600 as well as LD 1570.

Rep. Bill Pluecker (I-Warren) was the lead sponsor on LD 363 and worked hard to get LD 129 passed, while Senator Rick Bennet (R-Oxford) was the lead Senate sponsor on LD 1503, 1505, and 1600 and helped to garner bipartisan support on all three bills.

Health and Human Services Committee Chairs Rep. Michele Meyer (D-Eliot) and Senator Ned Claxton (D-Androscoggin) worked behind the scenes to make sure our three safe drinking water bills made it over the finish line with bipartisan support and in the case of LD 129 and LD 1570, with unanimous support.

Rep. Ralph Tucker (D-Brunswick) and Senator Stacy Brenner (D-Scarborough), chairs of the Environment and Natural Resources committee, worked hard to make sure the bills fighting against PFAS contamination made it over the finish line.

Rep. Wayne Parry (R-Arundel) worked hard on LD 363, and Senator Trey Stewart (R-Aroostook) was the lead on LD 129.

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