

3/17/2021

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee in favor of LD 363 and LD 627

Good morning Senator Carney, Representative Harnet and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Nathan Saunders and my wife and I have lived at 30 Howe Road in Fairfield, Maine for 33 years, raising three sons here during that time. In a letter from the DEP dated February 18th of this year, I was informed that our drinking water has a combined PFOA and PFOS level of 12,910 parts per trillion. This level is 184 times the Federal Health Advisory of 70 parts per trillion. One way to look at this is that if the federal health advisory tells me I can take only one pill of PFAS per day to be safe, I have just learned that I have been taking 184 pills of PFAS per day of this manmade, hazardous substance for many years, not of my own free will.

On the other side of the street from our home are many acres of corn fields where spreading of some material, I thought it was just manure, has occurred for many years and according to the DEP, was stopped in 2003. In 2010, seven years later, my wife's kidney's failed hard. To keep her alive, she went on kidney dialysis three hours per day, three times a week, for eight months until we were fortunate in that I was able to donate a kidney to her. Although the kidney transplant was lifesaving, this event has been life changing and very challenging to my wife and me, and has had a significant impact on our whole family.

According to the Federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, PFOA and PFOS have average half-lives of six (6) and fifteen (15) years respectively, suggesting that the level of PFAS in our well was possibly much higher over the last 18 years. According to this same federal agency, in 2006, the EPA worked with major manufacturers of PFAS related products to phase out these agents. If we had only known in 2006 that our wells were severely contaminated with PFAS! In this same agency report, in a study regarding "Kidney Effects", the report says: "Several Epidemiological studies on occupational, general, and community populations report an association between exposure to PFAS and reduced kidney function". I am stunned to recently find out that PFAS contamination is likely the reason for our challenging health experiences over the last eleven years.

The question I have which is troubling is ... was sludge spreading near my home stopped in 2003 because there was knowledge that the sludge contained a harmful chemical? That is yet to be determined, but it is clear now that it could have been life changing if someone had tested our well and other wells in the community in 2003, to make sure

that the citizens that supported these industries where PFAS may have been used, were not being contaminated with a hazardous chemical that clearly an industrial entity brought into the community. If someone knew about this hazardous land contamination in 2003, then someone or some entity didn't treat their fellow man right. Someone was making money at the expense of the common hard-working people of Maine.

For my family, if I had heard in 2003 that PFAS was a potential health threat and the level of this hazardous chemical was very high in our well water, I would have installed a treatment system immediately at my own cost; we still had two sons at home at that time.

In conclusion, I urge this committee to pass LD 363 and LD 627 so that my family and many other families in the State of Maine have the opportunity to discover the truth about what has caused PFAS contamination in Maine, and so that affected people are not silenced by a Maine Statute of Limitations that would unreasonably favor business profits and not allow the citizens of Maine to have the due process of law.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Nathan A. Saunders".

Nathan Saunders

Ref: "PFAS, An Overview of the Science and Guidance for Clinicians on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)", Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, www.atsdr.cdc.gov