

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 18, 2021

Deborah A. Szaro
Acting Regional Administrator
EPA New England, Region 1
5 Post Office Square - Suite 100
Boston, MA 02109-3912

Dear Acting Administrator Szaro:

Congratulations on your new role leading the EPA Council on PFAS (ECP). Given Maine's extensive and unfortunate experience with PFAS issues, we write to help inform the work of the ECP and encourage collaboration with regulators, stakeholders, and affected communities in our state.

We are pleased that the EPA has established this new council on PFAS. Such leadership is needed to facilitate the federal, state, and local cooperation necessary to address the public health risks and economic harm caused by these contaminants. In Administrator Regan's directives to the ECP, he encourages "close interagency coordination on regional specific and cross-media issues to assist states, Tribes, and local communities faced with significant and complex PFAS challenges" as well as "expanded engagement opportunities with federal, state, and tribal partners to ensure consistent communications, exchange information, and identify collaborative solutions." Maine has been faced with several cases of severe PFAS contamination over the past several years, outlined below, so we urge the EPC to work closely with and rely on the experience and expertise of Maine stakeholders in addressing these challenges.

In 2016, a dairy farmer in Arundel, Maine, discovered the milk produced by his cows was tainted from PFAS contamination. The cow's milk from this family farm contained some of the highest levels ever reported for a PFAS contaminant, and PFAS was also found at raised levels in both the drinking water on the farm and in a public water supply well. Unfortunately, this problem is being discovered at additional dairy farms across the state. In 2020, a dairy farm located in Fairfield, Maine, found PFAS levels that were 153 times higher than Maine's standard for determining whether milk is fit for sale. The PFAS contamination on both of these farms came from wastewater sludge spread as fertilizer and has prevented these farms from selling products. As you can imagine, the discovery of PFAS contamination has caused financial hardship for these Maine farms and concern amongst the broader dairy community. Additionally, it has strained the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's resources as there is little federal aid available to assist farms facing a PFAS problem.

In addition, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, in coordination with other state agencies, continues to investigate sites where the presence of PFAS compounds are possible. Between 2013 and 2019, sampling activities conducted by EPA and the State of Maine have resulted in testing for PFAS concentration in a total of 53 public water systems in Maine, which represents more than 65 percent of Maine's population that is served by Community

Water Systems. While only one small community water system had PFAS levels above the health advisory, it is clear PFAS is present throughout Maine's water systems, and it is incredibly expensive to remove. Recently, the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Wells Water District spent nearly \$1.5 million to remove PFAS from their water system.

We urge the ECP to analyze Maine's issues with PFAS contamination and help work to offer meaningful solutions for our state. We stand ready to assist the ECP with its work, and ask that you notify us if congressional action is needed in particular areas. We look forward to partnering with you on this critical work, and thank you again for your commitment to improving public health and the environment.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress