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The Maine State Legislature: Leading on PFAS Policy Work

In 2017, one dairy farmer's land and herd were found to be contaminated with PFAS as a result of historic sludge spreading activities. It took 2 additional years for the state to respond by creating a PFAS Taskforce with stakeholders in 2019. The work of this task force informed multiple legislative approaches. These include efforts to discover the extent of the contamination through testing, begin to reduce PFAS in consumer and industrial products, set up a safety net for impacted farmers, and attempt to regulate the use of the chemicals in products coming into the state. In this presentation, Maine's specific legislative approach will be covered.

The act of testing land previously spread with sludge has yielded results that require multiple department responses as well as statutory changes to protect both human and environmental health. From contaminated soils to unsafe drinking water on neighboring properties that share the same aquifer, the discovery of elevated PFAS levels have motivated a state response that is concerted, organized, and collaborative. Maine has achieved some profound policy successes but more work is still to be done and research is needed to inform additional legislative approaches going forward.