



Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture

- Support **FOR House Bill No. 5844**, An Act Related to Waters & Navigation - Water Pollution
- Hearing date: April 9, 2025

Chair David Bennett and distinguished Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island and as chair of the League's Climate Team, I am testifying in support of House Bill 5844, an Act that would require all applicants for the distribution or land application of biosolids in Rhode Island to test first for the presence of PFAs. Test results would then be included with their application to the Department of Environmental Management for approval.

This is clearly an important bill if we are to minimize the risk of PFAs permeating the soil and seeping into ground water or nearby waterways. This Committee has been leading the way for the past two-plus years by supporting legislation that would reduce the presence of PFAs in our drinking water, firefighting gear, and the oh-so-many products we own and use. A growing body of scientific evidence indicates PFAS pose serious health risks for a very long time to both people and animals.

Requiring PFAS testing on biosolids from anyone who hopes to sell or distribute such products in Rhode Island is an important follow-up to prior, enacted PFA bans in this state. Like them, House Bill 5844 would promote the general health, safety, and welfare of residents in all our communities. Passage of this bill would further minimize our residents' exposure to these forever chemicals by preventing biosolids with an unacceptable level of PFAs to be distributed in our communities, and thereby minimize further contamination of drinking water and locally grown food.

Additionally, this bill requires all operators, once approved by the Department of Environmental Management as well as existing operators, test for PFAs in their biosolids each quarter and submit those results to the Department for approval to continue sale or distribution of their product.

Given the known health risks of PFAs and the need to safeguard the public from any unneeded exposure to these harmful chemicals, the League of Women Voters asks you to support House Bill 5844 and send it to the Senate with a recommendation for passage.

Sincerely,

Diana (Donnie) McGee

Diana (Donnie) McGee, Advocacy Committee Cochair

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