

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 500

H.P. 329

House of Representatives, February 11, 2025

An Act to Ensure Access to Safe Drinking Water from Household Wells in Rural Areas by Expanding Testing

Received by the Clerk of the House on February 6, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative PLUECKER of Warren.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ANKELES of Brunswick, FLYNN of Albion, GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach, RANA of Bangor, SHAGOURY of Hallowell, STOVER of Boothbay, Senators: INGWERSEN of York, MOORE of Washington.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §2602-A, sub-§3**, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 483, Pt. BB, §2, is
3 repealed and the following enacted in its place:

4 **3. Private residential water testing for low-income residents.** The department shall
5 establish and maintain programs to provide free testing for contaminants of the private
6 residential water supplies of low-income residents. As used in this subsection, "low-income
7 resident" means a person who receives assistance under the MaineCare program or the food
8 supplement program under section 3104.

9 **A. The programs must include:**

10 (1) A program through the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory
11 established in section 565 to provide testing for arsenic and other contaminants
12 specified in section 2660-T; and

13 (2) A program to provide testing for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl
14 substances, as defined in Title 38, section 1614, subsection 1, paragraph F, through
15 contracts with qualified laboratories. The testing must be based on the most
16 recently available analytical method approved by the federal Environmental
17 Protection Agency that quantifies the maximum levels of perfluoroalkyl and
18 polyfluoroalkyl substances.

19 **B. The department may not charge any fee or recover any cost as otherwise permitted**
20 **by this chapter for a test of a private residential water supply performed for a low-**
21 **income resident under the programs established pursuant to this subsection. The**
22 **department shall use funds from the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory**
23 **dedicated account to pay program costs under paragraph A.**

24 **C. The department shall conduct educational outreach to increase awareness among**
25 **low-income residents with private residential water supplies of:**

26 (1) The availability of free well water testing under this subsection; and

27 (2) The availability of grants under Title 30-A, section 4722, paragraph FF to pay
28 for drinking water treatment systems to reduce exposure to contaminants.
29 Outreach under this subparagraph must be conducted in consultation with the
30 Maine State Housing Authority.

31 **Sec. 2. 30-A MRSA §4722, sub-§1, ¶FF**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 322, §1, is
32 further amended to read:

33 FF. Provide grants to eligible homeowners who are served by private well water that
34 shows evidence of ~~high levels of arsenic contamination~~ a contaminant described in
35 Title 22, section 2660-T in an amount that exceeds state standards. For purposes of
36 this paragraph, "homeowner" includes an individual who occupies a single-family
37 dwelling that is located on land that is owned by a member of that individual's
38 immediate family and "immediate family" means a spouse, parent, child, sibling,
39 stepchild, stepparent and grandparent;

1

SUMMARY

2 This bill adds contaminants to the Department of Health and Human Services' uniform
3 testing recommendation for private wells. The bill requires a program to provide free
4 testing for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances in household well water of low-
5 income residents through contracts with qualified laboratories to be paid for by funds from
6 the department's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory dedicated account. The
7 department is required to conduct educational outreach to make low-income residents
8 aware of the availability of free testing of well water and eligibility for grants from the
9 Maine State Housing Authority to pay for water treatment systems. The bill clarifies that
10 homeowners served by well water that exceeds state standards for perfluoroalkyl and
11 polyfluoroalkyl substances and other contaminants are eligible for the grants.