

Maine People Have the Right to Safe, Clean Drinking Water

SUPPORT LD 1162



Access to safe, clean water is a basic human right. We're supposed to drink at least 8 glasses each day to stay healthy... but for some Maine families, every sip contains toxic chemicals like arsenic -- linked to lowered IQ levels, and skin and bladder cancer.

Maine's double risk

Mainers are uniquely vulnerable to toxic chemicals in drinking water, for two reasons:

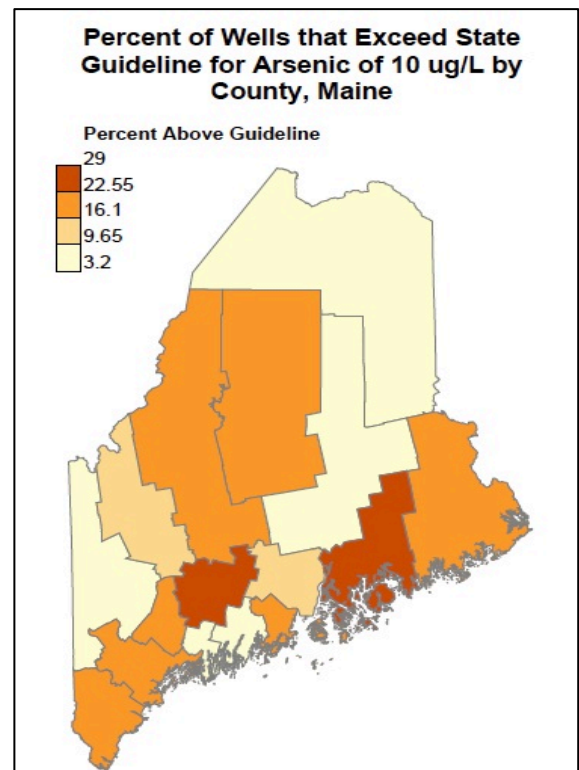
1. Maine is situated on top of bedrock and soils that naturally produce toxic arsenic and other harmful chemicals that bubble up into our drinking water.
2. Federal and state safe drinking water standards don't apply to private wells, which roughly half of all Mainers rely on for drinking and cooking. In fact, in some regions, almost every household relies on private wells.

Maine private well water: Under-tested, and often toxic

Less than half of private wells in Maine have been tested for toxic chemicals like arsenic, but it is estimated that **over 10%** of private well water households have unsafe drinking water. **In several Maine towns, 30% of private wells have unsafe arsenic levels.**¹

Scientific studies have linked exposure to arsenic to cancer of the skin, lung, and bladder, as well as lowered IQ levels. Developing babies and young children are particularly vulnerable because of their developing brains and bodies.

Maine CDC recommends testing for arsenic, as well other chemicals, every 3 - 5 years. Unfortunately, many people don't know to test their wells at all. For low-income families, the cost of treatment makes accessing safe drinking water even more difficult. ***So what can we do?***



¹ Nielsen, M.G., Lombard, P.J., and Schalk, L.F., 2010, Assessment of arsenic concentrations in domestic well water, by town, in Maine, 2005–09: U.S. Geological Survey Scientific Investigations Report 2010–5199, 68.

SUPPORT LD 1162, AN ACT TO ENSURE SAFE DRINKING WATER FOR ALL MAINE FAMILIES



The Act to Ensure Safe Drinking Water for All Maine Families will protect children's health by improving testing and treatment of contaminants in private residential drinking water wells, which are otherwise exempt from state and federal safe drinking water laws.

LD 1162 Would:

- ❖ **Improve the rate of wells tested for arsenic, radon and other toxic chemicals.** The Act will increase testing rates of private wells by requiring wells to be tested for arsenic whenever a property in Maine is sold and whenever a new well is drilled.
- ❖ **Establish a Private Well Safe Drinking Water Fund to support Maine residents in testing and treatment of private well water.** Supported through nominal testing and treatment fees, this Fund will be used to launch and sustain education outreach efforts that will help to improve testing rates. Existing resources will also supplement these efforts.
- ❖ **Expand access to well testing and treatment for the neediest families.** The Private Well Safe Drinking Water Fund will also help to assist families with children in poverty who live with contaminated well water to access water treatment options.

Please help ensure all Maine children have a healthy start by improving access to safe drinking water