

Lynne Gilbert
Bristol

515 Benner Rd.
Bristol, ME 04539
April 22, 2021 (Earth Day)

Committee On Environment and Natural Resources
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

To the Honorable Stacy Brenner, Senate Chair, Honorable Ralph Tucker, House Chair, and distinguished members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Lynne Gilbert and I'm writing in support of the effort to support municipal recycling programs through extended producer responsibility for packaging. I refer, of course, to LD 1541.

I was for some years a member of a small group which runs the Elmer Tarr Roadside Litter Pickup in Bristol each year. This group mobilizes residents, businesses and non-profits in our town to walk the roads of Bristol collecting trash. And we can tell you that there is no shortage of plastic trash that is found each year. And we know all too well that what these good citizens collect is only a tiny percentage of the plastic trash that is being generated by our wasteful systems of product manufacturing.

In our little town of Bristol, we have seen much the same changes in the last few years that other Maine towns have seen. We can no longer recycle any plastics except for #2 at our transfer station. This places a huge strain on the costs of transporting our trash to the landfill and also increases our local taxes.

Even if every town does its very best to recycle, producers are still going to continue producing non-recyclable packaging. For this reason, it is important that the financial impact on manufacturers should be significant; otherwise they will not be convinced to actually change their packaging to something more sustainable.

It's important not only that legislation will transfer the cost of landfilling trash from taxpayers to the manufacturers, but that the volume of the trash will be reduced.

The forces arrayed against this legislation will be vast, and deep-pocketed. The fossil fuel industry, seeing that the future of gasoline and heating fuels will be hugely reduced by adaptation to climate change, will be placing all their efforts into producing more and more plastics.

I should also mention that my group was formerly an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful (KAB), which we were encouraged to join because we thought it fit well with our focus on litter. After a few years, however, we realized that KAB is really just a front group for manufacturers like Coca Cola, Anheuser Busch and others, whose goals were really to make consumers responsible and to reject their own responsibility for environmental stewardship. We subsequently terminated our relationship with KAB. These huge and extremely profitable corporations must be held to account.

For all of these reasons, it is critical that the legislature passes LD 1541. LD 1471 is a much weaker bill, and will not suffice to accomplish these goals.

respectfully,

Lynne E. Gilbert