

131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

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H.P. 619

House of Representatives, March 2, 2023

Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Evaluate Strategies for Improving the Returnable Beverage Container Laws

Submitted by the Department of Environmental Protection pursuant to Joint Rule 204. Reference to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources suggested and ordered printed.

R(+ B. Hunt

ROBERT B. HUNT Clerk

Presented by Representative GRAMLICH of Old Orchard Beach.

- 1 **Whereas,** the number of brands of beverages in returnable containers required to be 2 individually sorted by redemption centers has increased exponentially since redemption 3 centers were first authorized, increasing the labor necessary for handling beverage 4 containers; and
- 5 **Whereas,** labor, rent, utilities and other operating costs for redemption centers, 6 pick-up agents and other stakeholders have increased significantly; and

Whereas, new technological advances and diverse systems of cost and responsibility
distribution between stakeholders have been successfully deployed in other states and
countries that authorize bottle redemption and some of these systems will provide
efficiencies if adapted to the State; and

- 11 **Whereas,** the redemption rate for beverage containers in Maine ranges from 67% to 12 85% depending on the type of container and the initiator of deposit; and
- Whereas, the redemption centers have been successful in removing the blight of litter from Maine's landscape and providing a system for collection of these materials for recycling; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Department of Environment Protection to review returnable 16 beverage container laws. Resolved: That the Department of Environmental Protection 17 shall consult with stakeholders and provide recommendations for any necessary changes to 18 19 the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, chapter 33 to maximize recycling of returnable beverage containers, ensure convenience and equity and reduce costs for collection and 20 handling. The department shall include any recommendations in the report required by the 21 22 Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, section 1772 to the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources by February 15, 2024. The committee may report out 23 24 legislation to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature relating to the 25 department's recommendations.

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SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Environmental Protection to convene a stakeholder group to develop recommendations to amend the provisions of law governing the recycling of returnable beverage containers and to submit those recommendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. The committee is authorized to report out legislation.