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**Testimony of Kevin Roche, CEO & General Manager,
ecomaine
before the Committee on the Environment & Natural Resources
in Opposition to LD 1009,
An Act Regarding the Reduction and Recycling of Food Waste
March 22, 2023**

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and distinguished members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation. My name is Kevin Roche, and I represent ecomaine as its CEO and General Manager. We are a quasi-municipal organization in Portland with more than 70 member communities in Maine. We own and operate Maine's largest recycling plant, a food waste recovery program, a waste-to-energy facility, and a landfill.

It is with a focus on ecomaine's food and organic waste recovery strategies that I am pleased to submit testimony today. Since ecomaine began a concerted effort to consolidate food scraps separately from solid waste or recyclables in 2017, we have diverted more than 25,000 tons of this material from Maine's landfills.

As this committee knows well, organic material is the leading cause of methane in landfills, which, as a greenhouse gas, is a significant cause of change in our climate. Allow me to be clear: we are supportive of efforts to keep this material from an end-of-life in landfills.

However, there are existing programs that are effective now, employing best practices to accomplish just that, that are currently in place and successful in Maine. Notably, as I mentioned above, ecomaine's efforts to keep 25,000 tons of food waste from being landfilled, as well as others already in practice.

These strategies and best practices are currently in place to provide convenient methods of disposal for organic waste – a material that is complicated for residents and producers to deal with under the best of circumstances. It is ecomaine's position that LD 1009 would unnecessarily provide more barriers to these best practices, not fewer.

Again, we are supportive of efforts to divert more of this material from Maine's landfills, but not at the risk of interfering with processes and strategies that are already working for Maine. Thank you for your consideration.