



TESTIMONY of Megan Diver
Vice President
Maine Energy Marketers Association

May 2, 2023

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON E
NVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
In Opposition to LD 1418**

" An Act Concerning Single-use Disposable Water Bottles and Water Refill Stations"

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Megan Diver, I am the Vice President of the Maine Energy Marketers Association (MEMA).

MEMA is a trade association composed of approximately 300-member companies and over 5,000 direct and 5,000 indirect people working in energy delivery and servicing businesses delivering heating oil, biofuels, motor fuels, propane, pellets and kerosene and offering service and installations on the equipment that operates these fuels. In addition, our members own and operate 70% of Maine's 1,300 convenience stores, throughout Maine. They employ approximately 10,000 Maine people and sell more than 1 billion gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel each year. Our members also sell more than 90% of all the propane sold in our state every year. We provide education and training to the heating, ventilation, air conditioning, weatherization, and energy auditing trades for hundreds annually through our courses at our own state of the art training facility MEMA Technical Education Center (MTEC) in Brunswick.

While we appreciate the intentions of LD 1418, we are opposed to the bill.

Not everyone has access to safe, reliable drinking water. Some tap water could have other hidden contaminants. A study recently released warned of "biofilm" in America's plumbing. Think of biofilm like a mucus membrane that coats water pipes, harboring bacteria that contribute to 7 million waterborne illnesses that occur every year. It can be thick enough to protect bacteria from disinfectants. Not only are plastic bottles vital when water quality is questionable, it's also a necessity in an emergency. From hurricanes to blizzards, fires and power outages, bottled water provides utility during emergencies.

Banning plastic water bottles specifically would remove a healthy beverage choice for consumers, leading to increased consumption of unhealthy sugary drinks.

As I mentioned in my introduction, we represent 70% of all convenience stores and their owners throughout Maine. These stores are mostly owned and operated by small-business owners that have already suffered financially due to the pandemic, taking away a solid revenue stream at this time would only make things worse.

Convenience store owners say that the sales of individual water bottles are a good revenue stream for their business with a strong profit margin. Without a reasonable replacement to offer customers, this ban is unreasonable during these already difficult times. The alternative to plastic water bottles are: boxed water (eight times the cost) and water in aluminum cans (five times the cost), neither of which makes sense financially. Neither boxed nor aluminum can waters can be re-used like a water bottle can and could potentially lead to more trash.

Putting in place these requirements would hurt our large in-state beverage producers. They may be unable to comply as readily, or at all, in comparison to the larger companies. There's a possibility that the companies may opt simply to not sell goods in state creating problems with product availability. The other components of this legislation create sanitation concerns,, enforcement concerns and create a burden to small businesses.

In addition to the concerns above we think it is important to note that many companies are already setting making it priority and plans to integrate recycled content into their packaging. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. We urge the Committee to vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 1418.