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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
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HEATHER JOHNSON  
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Testimony of Heather Johnson

On LD 1418 An Act Concerning Single-use Disposable Water Bottles and Water Refill Stations

May 3, 2023

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Heather Johnson, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 1418, *An Act Concerning Single-use Disposable Water Bottles and Water Refill Stations*.

We know that this bill is well-meaning. However, the Department does have concerns about the burden on businesses of requiring them to provide a water refill station within their establishment. The Department is opposed to the requirements in the bill which relate specifically to business owners who offer uncarbonated, unflavored drinking water for sale.

A key strategy identified in the 10 Year Strategic Plan is to maintain a stable business environment. We must provide predictability and transparency to support current and future investments in Maine. While some of the retail establishments that offer uncarbonated, unflavored drinking water for sale are large – like grocery stores and wholesale clubs – there are many more which are small businesses like convenience stores and sandwich shops. This places different levels of financial burden on businesses to comply with the bill's provisions. It is our position that it is best for businesses to make decisions about whether and how to provide water refill stations based on their individual financial and operational needs and constraints.

Thank you for your time, and your consideration of this bill.