



**MAINE MUNICIPAL  
ASSOCIATION SINCE 1936**

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition To

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

April 28, 2023

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Sen. Brenner, Rep. Gramlich and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham and I submitting testimony in opposition LD 1418 - *An Act Concerning Single-use Disposable Water Bottles and Water Refill Stations*, on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association, which represents the interests of municipal government before the Legislature. The positions of the Association are established by our 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC), who are elected by the councils and selectboards of municipalities in each of Maine's 35 Senate districts.

As drafted, this bill preempts home rule, constitutes a mandate on municipal government, and targets a single product that is necessary for municipalities to have on hand to support first responders and crisis situations from residents with undrinkable tap water to management of traffic accidents and structure fires.

Municipalities need access to portable and individualized water to support first responders on large scale disasters, managing events, accidents, and to provide life sustaining hydration in the event of an emergency. Municipal officials can declare an emergency that is specific and localized, however this bill only allows the Governor to declare an emergency where bottled water could be used. This is inappropriate and unachievable in the midst of a local disaster.

Municipalities, where they have resources, have been placing bottle filling stations adjacent to public water fountains however this bill forces municipalities to install such stations in all public buildings, regardless of the existence of drinking fountains. This includes all buildings owned or managed by municipalities including those not routinely visited by the public and unlikely to be used. Communities who have placed these in spaces where appropriate have advised they are a significant cost and run around \$8,000. These costs would need to be assumed by the state unless it receives 2/3 vote to override the requirement from both bodies of the legislature.

While officials share concerns around plastic bottles in general, targeting bottled water exclusively unnecessarily complicates municipal operations and takes away community choice and agency to determine what their priorities are without achieving a reduction of waste, or elimination of need. For all these reasons, municipal officials urge you to remove the application to local units of government entirely from this bill or vote ought not pass on LD 1418.