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Monday, January 15, 2024

Subject: Testimony in Support of LD 2091 - An Act Regarding Businesses' and Consumers' Use of Returnable, Reusable, and Refillable Containers

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry,

My name is Alexandra Doudera, I am a resident of Portland and am writing to express my strong support for LD 2091. As the Founder of Saltwater Classroom, a non-profit dedicated to ocean education with young students as well as learners of all ages, I have witnessed firsthand the pressing issue of plastic pollution and its impact on our oceans.

In our programming with children ages 8-12, we explore solutions to issues such as plastic pollution through engaging discussions and activities. During these sessions, kids frequently propose creative re-use solutions for food packaging as food packaging is one of the most common items we pick up during beach clean-ups and something they interact with daily. Their solutions run the gamut, but imagine inventive robots, impactful public awareness messages, and large-scale dishwashers. These ideas, while imaginative, are not new nor far-fetched. They represent a genuine and untapped well of potential solutions that could be implemented, perhaps even by these young minds as they mature into high-schoolers and beyond.

The key to unlocking this potential lies in the support of legislation like LD 2091. By encouraging businesses and consumers to adopt returnable, reusable, and refillable containers, this bill not only aligns with the safe and effective principles of "reuse" but also creates a conducive environment for the implementation of innovative solutions, like those generated by youth, entrepreneurs in Maine, or organizations.

As the Founder of an organization committed to ocean literacy and sustainability, I firmly believe that supporting and passing LD 2091 is a crucial step toward fostering sustainable change. This bill presents an opportunity for Maine to lead the way in reducing plastic waste and encouraging a paradigm shift in our approach to consumption.

I urge you to consider the long-term impact of LD 2091 on our environment, our communities, and the potential for young students, entrepreneurs, and organizations to make a meaningful difference in revolutionizing our waste streams. This legislation has the potential to empower Maine to take active steps towards a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Doudera
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