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Waldo
LD 2091

To: Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

From: Letitia Manning

Date: Jan 22, 2024

Re: Testimony in support of LD 2091, An Act to Allow the Reuse of Food Containers
by More
than One Customer

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

About 9 years ago a group of fourth graders came to me wanting to start a No Straws
campaign in our school cafeteria to save sea turtles. I agreed to help them, and as I
learned about plastic pollution in our oceans, air, water and environment I became
aware of the huge problem of single use plastic, an issue I had been unaware of.

Plastic pollution is building up and it never goes away. Plastic production is harmful
to the planet- requiring fossil fuels to extract the oil, form the plastic, run the
machines to make the plastic and to ship it. Plastic can't really be recycled, only
downcycled- 1 time. It is piling up, literally.

Plastic production and incineration contribute to climate change and air pollution.

And tons of plastic ends up in the ocean each year- an amount equivalent to the
weight of 57,000 blue whales — every single year.

An old figure we still use is that 100,000 marine mammals die each year, and a
million birds are killed from plastic pollution. Each year. As the plastics degrade into
ever finer particles they continue to release toxins into the environment and the food
chain.

In addition, the chemicals in plastic, including takeout and food storage containers,
leach into foods and are building up in our bodies, with unknown consequences.

As an elementary teacher I spend my days looking into the faces of our youngest,
most vulnerable citizens. It is clear to me that our most important task is to protect our
children and their future. One of the most effective ways to do so would be to reduce
the production and use of plastic. By allowing takeout containers to be reusable, you
would be preserving natural resources and improving water, air and climate for all.
This bill could also improve the health of young and old, as many of the chemicals in
single use food packaging are known to be harmful.

Supporting LD 2091 means supporting small businesses, small farmers, and the
beautiful Maine lands and waters. LD 2091 is a powerful way to build a future of
hope for us all.