

Margot Downs  
Yarmouth  
LD 2091

To: Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

From: Margot Downs

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. My name is Margot Downs and a resident of Yarmouth. I am writing to support LD 2091, An Act to Allow the Reuse of Food Containers by More than One Customer.

More and more Maine families and businesses depend on the local take-out food economy to keep our busy lives functioning. I want to support local food vendors but don't because of single-use packaging.

Single-use plastic containers are a major contributor to litter, polluting our beautiful landscapes and waterways. Scientific studies continue to find that single-use plastic is an unsafe and unhealthy option. Maine landfills are nearing capacity, and single-use containers take up significant space.

Maine passed an EPR Packaging law and modernized Bottle Bill law that incentivizes and encourages businesses to embrace reuse. LD 2091 is necessary to allow the implementation of local reuse programs and to help Maine reach its climate goals. By encouraging and enabling reuse, we can extend the lifespan of valuable landfill space and conserve resources.

Last year, students at our local high school started a dishware reuse program that replaces single-use dishes and utensils with reusable ones at sports and club dinners. Since starting the program, they prevented over 6,000 plates/utensils and 95 trash bags from incineration. The demand for the dishware service continues to increase. Imagine what these innovative and talented students could accomplish if they took this initiative and turned it into a business! Right now, they can't.

Voting "ought to pass" on bill LD 2091 supports innovation, job creation, small businesses, and waste reduction which are essential to a healthy and sustainable future for Maine's residents.

Sincerely,  
Margot Downs