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Testimony of Kevin Roche, CEO/General Manager of **ecomaine**

Environment & Natural Resources Committee in Opposition of

LD 231, An Act To Update The Solid Waste Management Hierarchy

March 17, 2025

ecomaine is a non-profit publicly owned and publicly operated solid waste organization serving 74 municipalities - 20 owner communities and 54 associate and contract member communities – accommodating the waste management needs for a population of nearly 500,000 people. **ecomaine**'s operations and programs include: Waste-to-Energy (WTE) renewable power plant, single-sort Recycling Center, a food waste recovery program, and a 289-acre ashfill/landfill. Perhaps most unique and notable aspect of **ecomaine** is the commitment as a leader in raising public awareness of sustainable waste management strategies. This very commitment is included in **ecomaine**'s Mission Statement established by **ecomaine**'s Board of Directors:

“ecomaine provides comprehensive long-term solid waste solutions in a safe, environmentally responsible, economically sound manner, and is a leader in raising public awareness of sustainable waste management strategies”

The Solid Waste Management Hierarchy, affirmed by Maine's Legislature in 2007, has been the gold standard in regional guidance for handling municipal solid waste (MSW) and continues to be supported by the EPA. While **ecomaine** is proud to emphasize the significant role of Waste-to-Energy as part of the solid waste hierarchy, we don't support a change to the waste hierarchy and assert that the current hierarchy provides an important policy to handle MSW. An area for improvement is the need to incentivize upper rungs of the hierarchy to ensure that environmentally sound disposal of MSW is successfully executed.

Research substantiates the fact that WTE facilities - *waste processing that reduces the volume of waste needing land disposal, including incineration* - provide significant environmental protection, complement community recycling programs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce MSW volume and generate renewable electricity. **ecomaine** has invested in programs to advance education and understanding of the benefits of WTE, Recycling and the Solid Waste Hierarchy by issuing grants to local schools, sponsoring community outreach events, and hiring Educators to interface directly with schools and civic organizations. **ecomaine** is committed to

managing waste on the higher rungs of the Solid Waste Hierarchy which seeks to reduce-reuse-recycle prior to processing non-recyclable waste at the WTE Plant. **ecomaine**'s commitment to increasing Recycling rates extends beyond its first-in-the-State single-sort recycling center to a new proposed State of the art recycling facility that will process 3x the current tonnage and is due to come on-line in 2028. **ecomaine** completely supports this pioneering and innovative expansion to meet the growing needs of **ecomaine**'s communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.