

Commentary on LD 56

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Greetings to our hard working members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

I am opposed to LD 56 for many reasons.

I am a medical doctor in Androscoggin County, as well as a member of the Maine Medical Association and its Public Health Committee. I also serve on the board of "Maine Rivers", a non-profit organization which works to maintain and improve the quality of our state's rivers. My comments do not represent official positions taken by these organizations, though I expect both groups would be in agreement with my comments.

It's my belief that LD 56 has been effective in reducing plastic pollution throughout our state and has thereby improved the appearance of our state's lands and waters. It has also helped reduce the burden of plastic pollution in invisible forms such as microplastic and nanoplastic particles.

The science regarding the health hazards posed by plastic pollution is young, but even now several studies have proven that plastic is contaminating our blood and tissues through the air we breathe, and the water, and food products that we ingest. Indeed, the question is no longer about whether our bodies contain plastic pollutants. It is instead a question of how much plastic is in our bodies.

Evidence is mounting that plastic in our bodies causes hormonal disruption, cardiovascular disease, and various cancers. These illnesses cross all party lines, affect both rural and city residents, and all age groups.

Paying just a few cents per bag provided by grocery and other stores has been effective in making people think twice before receiving a new plastic bag

at the point of sale. The small cost is not a financial burden to anyone, but does serve as a reminder of the importance of reducing our plastic pollution. It's my firm belief that LD 56 represents a seriously harmful step backward in our battle to maintain and improve the health of our citizens. Please resist such misguided initiatives.