



Comments in Opposition to **L.D. 56**, An Act to Remove the 5 Cent Fee for Bags in Retail Stores;  
and in Opposition to **L.D. 69**, An Act to Repeal the Law Restricting the Use of Certain Plastic,  
Paper, and Single-Use Bags

By Mark Draper  
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Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources. Hello, my name is Mark Draper and I am the Solid Waste Director for Aroostook Waste Solutions ("AWS"). I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to the L.D.'s 56 and 69 as referenced above.

AWS is a not-for-profit corporation owned by the municipalities of Fort Fairfield, Limestone, Caribou, and Presque Isle in Aroostook County, Maine. The mission of Aroostook Waste Solutions is to provide solid waste management services to the Aroostook County region; in a way that is equitable, environmentally sound, and cost-effective; so that those services can be provided over the long-term. To accomplish this mission, we own and operate the Tri-Community Landfill in Fort Fairfield, and a transfer station in Presque Isle. AWS also provides drop-off recycling services for fourteen (14) communities in the central Aroostook region.

Our reason for opposing these bills is the same reason we supported the original effort to implement the ban on single-use plastic bags; which is, to significantly reduce the amount of windblown litter at our facilities. Litter is a continuous problem at any solid waste facility, and after twenty-one years of operating a facility, I can report that anecdotally, the ban has reduced the amount of windblown litter at our landfill. Single use plastic bags used to make up a large portion of the litter at our facility, which makes sense when you consider that the bags are extremely lightweight and tend to "balloon" in the wind. Without the widespread use of these bags, that portion of our "litter stream" has now been removed.

The ban also makes sense when applying the waste management hierarchy to this issue. Eliminating the use of the plastic bags is an example of waste reduction at the source, which is the highest and best management strategy. Since litter removal is a labor-intensive, expensive process; initially avoiding the creation of it is the best option.

Thank you for considering these comments as you consider these bills.

