

To: Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
From: Kaelin Ferland, Maine Youth for Climate Justice  
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025



RE: Testimony in opposition to L.D. 56: “An Act to Remove the 5 Cent Fee for Bags in Retail Stores” and L.D. 69: “An Act to Repeal the Law Restricting the Use of Certain Plastic, Paper and Single-use Bags,” and in support of L.D. 1122: “An Act to Amend the Law Banning Single-use Carry-out Bags”

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Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Kaelin Ferland. I am the Outreach Coordinator at Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), a statewide coalition of more than 500 youth advocating for a more sustainable, just, and livable future.

Our organization opposes L.D. 56 and L.D. 69, which would increase waste in our state and worsen plastic pollution throughout Maine’s environment, by eliminating bag fees and repealing existing single-use plastic bag bans. These bills would only harm Maine’s natural resources and threaten both human and environmental health.

Bag fees have been effective in changing consumer behavior, helping reduce waste by encouraging Mainers to bring their own reusable bags to retailers to avoid the fees. The single-use plastic bag ban passed in 2019 has also played an integral role in minimizing our reliance on plastic and resulting pollution.

Maine Youth for Climate Justice would also like to express our support for L.D. 1122 and its stricter regulations on plastic bags and proposed fee increase to 10 cents. This would further dissuade consumers from purchasing wasteful disposable bags and encourage them to bring reusable alternatives.

Many states with bag bans in effect have fees of 10 cents or more, including states in New England like Vermont and Connecticut. Maine should follow to encourage more sustainable consumer practices.

Youth and our environment are being poisoned by plastics. While adults may not see it in their lifetimes, their children and their futures will be disproportionately burdened by plastics and their impacts. For these reasons, the more than 500 members of Maine Youth for Climate Justice respectfully urge you to vote against L.D. 56 and L.D. 69, and in support of L.D. 1122.