

Testimony of Lani Graham, MD, MPH

In Opposition to LD 56

An Act to Remove the 5 Cent Fee for Bags in Retail Stores

Presented by Representative Lemelin

Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, March 26, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Lani Graham. I am here in opposition to LD 56 as a public health expert and as a physician interested in the health of future generations. Maine made a great step forward in banning the use of plastic bags. This bill and others that you will be considering take us backward.

We already know that there is too much plastic in the environment. While we have known that plastics are getting into our liver and kidneys, now there is strong scientific evidence that plastic has gotten into human brains at higher level than in either the liver or kidney.¹ And plastics are being found in human hearts.² Both of these studies are alarming. We need to continue to reduce the plastics in our environment.

A sad fact is that plastics are a fossil fuel product. This means that as we reduce our use of fossil fuels for energy, the production of plastics is likely to increase unless we are constantly at work trying to limit plastic use.

Please keep Maine moving forward in the fight to reduce plastics in our environment. Thank you.

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03453-1>

² <https://www.acs.org/pressroom/presspacs/2023/august/microplastics-found-in-human-heart-tissues-before-and-after-surgical-procedures.html>