

Testimony of Joshua Tweedie

In SUPPORT of LD 1306 'An Act to Continue the Exemption for Polystyrene Foam Disposable Food Service Containers Prepackaged at Wholesale'.

Dear Senator Tepler - Chair, Representative Doudera - Chair, and members of the committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

My name is Josh Tweedie, and I am the proud owner of three IGA grocery stores in Northern Maine—located in Fort Fairfield, Mars Hill, and Presque Isle—as well as a full-service restaurant The Maple Pig Bar & Grill and a growing catering and food truck business. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony today in strong support of LD 1306 — a bill that will continue the exemption for polystyrene foam trays for raw protein packaged in-state at local, grocers and for raw protein that is prepackaged at wholesale.

Large corporate grocery chains and manufacturers will procure any available alternatives at market, and source them for less than what smaller stores will be able to purchase them at. Larger meat producers will fill and seal the trays before they ever hit the sales floor, and they move through them at a volume we, as small independent grocers, could never match. Small businesses who use polystyrene packaging will still be at a disadvantage as large chains and corporate manufacturers will have a greater chance of procuring alternatives at a better price and will absorb the limited inventory of the alternative packaging available in the market. While we appreciate that the sunset clause addresses both in-state and out-of-state packaged items, it does not in reality 'even the playing field.'

Meanwhile, small local stores like ours rely on these same trays to repackage bulk items like chicken, pork, or beef. We do this to create smaller, more affordable portions for our customers. Buying in bulk helps us keep our costs low, and while repackaging takes extra labor, it's worth it because it helps us stay competitive — especially in rural areas where families are shopping on a budget.

If this exemption is allowed to expire, it puts us — small businesses — at a serious disadvantage. We'll be forced to switch to alternative packaging that's significantly

more expensive. For us, this doesn't just mean higher supply costs. It means raising prices for our customers or absorbing the costs ourselves — and that hits our bottom line hard, especially in a time where increased expenses are crushing the profits of many Maine small businesses.

LD 1306 isn't about ignoring environmental responsibility — it's about fairness. It calls for a reasonable requirement to ensure that alternative packaging options are readily available, cost-comparable, and perform just as well. Please support this bill and help protect Maine's small businesses.

As someone deeply embedded in the food and beverage industry, I live and breathe the realities of tight margins, consumer habits, and the pressures to provide a wide selection of quality products to my customers. Please support LD 1306. Let's protect what works and continue to foster a competitive, thoughtful retail environment that benefits both consumers and businesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Joshua A. Tweedie
President/Owner
Tweedie, Inc.
Hillside IGA, Mars Hill IGA, Star City IGA

Email: josh@TweedieIGA.com

Cell #: 207-768-0930