

Frederick Crowe
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4/14/25

Dear Senator Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I am writing in **support of LD 1306 'An Act to Continue the Exemption for Polystyrene Foam Disposable Food Service Containers Prepackaged at Wholesale'**. My name is Frederick Crowe from Princeton, ME. I own 3 medium sized grocery stores in Downeast Maine and have been in this business since 1979. When I got out of the US Navy, I began working for 2 partners and grew our grocery business to 7 stores- in which I became 3rd partner in. About 12 years ago we decided to downsize to 4 stores, 3 of these stores I now own solely and hope to pass them on to my son and daughter. However, with all the changes coming down the road that are impacting Maine's small businesses, I'm beginning to have second thoughts on this.

My reason for writing you today is in support of LD 1306. Here are some of the key reasons:

- It is my understanding of that foam trays will be banned in July, however, this will put small retailers at a disadvantage as the larger protein producers and private label suppliers will purchase all the available alternative packaging trays.
- Currently, my supplier has limited alternatives that do not offer the same size/variation to meet my needs.
- If we switch to pulp trays or fiber ones they soak through and are very unsanitary, plus while also having a very limited selection.
- Alternatives are more expensive! The cost difference between foam and other trays is 4 to 6 times higher.
- Meat and other proteins require additional labor for processing, packaging, and display, which increases costs.
- Overall, us small grocery stores will have to mark the prices up on our meat products due to the extra cost of packaging and will not be able to compete with the big box stores on prices.
- We need to find a better substitute before we ban foam trays.
- We all know the cost of running a business is going up. We cannot support an increase.

Maine's small businesses are confronting a series of costs that impact us including the Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program, state minimum wage increases, Maine's Earned Paid Leave law, health insurance premiums, and unemployment tax rates.

Thank you for your consideration,
Frederick Crowe, Princeton Food Group
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