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LD 1423

I'm writing today in respectful opposition to LD 1423.

I appreciate the sponsors' longstanding commitment to environmental protection and waste reduction in Maine. I also understand the desire to refine a complex new policy like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging. However, I believe LD 1423, as written, would significantly weaken the foundation of Maine's landmark EPR law—at a time when we should be moving forward with implementation, not slowing it down or diluting its impact.

LD 1423 risks delaying implementation.

This bill introduces extensive new rulemaking, reporting, and definitional changes that will require more time and more bureaucracy to sort out. Even the deadline for producer payments has been pushed back, from 180 to 270 days after the contract is signed. While not labeled a delay, these changes will likely upend years of careful planning by towns, DEP, and environmental organizations working in good faith to launch the program.

It introduces broad exemptions that shift the burden.

LD 1423 expands the list of exemptions—carving out packaging used for pharmaceuticals, medical devices, industrial products, and more. While some exemptions may be reasonable, the sheer number and breadth of carve-outs risk allowing large corporations to avoid paying their share while leaving smaller businesses and Maine communities to pick up the tab. That's exactly what EPR was designed to fix.

It gives too much power to the industry-run stewardship organization.

The bill increases the authority of the stewardship organization to define recycling success, create incentives, and manage reporting systems. While DEP retains some oversight, the bill dilutes public accountability by allowing industry to shape the standards that they themselves will be judged by. This shift could compromise data transparency and weaken incentives for waste reduction and packaging innovation.

What Maine needs instead:

We need to stay the course on the strong, balanced EPR law passed in 2021. It was the result of years of work, negotiation, and public input. Instead of weakening it, we should be investing in its implementation—ensuring producers pay fairly, recycling becomes more effective and accessible, and Maine's towns and taxpayers are no longer left holding the bill for corporate waste.

LD 1423 may be well-intentioned, but in its current form, it threatens to undercut the very goals EPR was created to achieve. I urge you to oppose this bill and protect the integrity of one of the most promising environmental policies Maine has ever passed.

Thank you for your time and for your service.