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LD 1423

Members of the Committee:

In 2021 I submitted testimony in favor of Maine's Extended Producer Responsibility law, and was delighted when it passed. Since then I have followed closely the long and arduous process rule making and implementation of this landmark legislation.

It seems to me very telling that it has taken four long years for the opposition (by which I mean the major corporations, the fossil fuel industry and the politicians who do their work) to finally present LD 1423. I believe this is because those supporting LD 1423 never thought it would come to fruition, or that it would be watered down enough to suit them.

In 2021 when I originally testified in favor of the law, I mentioned the following points. They are still true:

- Even if every town does its very best to recycle, without the EPR law producers would still continue producing non-recyclable packaging. For this reason, it is important that the financial impact on manufacturers should be significant; otherwise they will not be convinced to actually change their packaging to something more sustainable.
- It's important not only that legislation will transfer the cost of landfilling trash from taxpayers to the manufacturers, but that the volume of the trash will be reduced.
- The forces arrayed against this law are vast, and deep-pocketed. The fossil fuel industry, seeing that the future of gasoline and heating fuels will be hugely reduced by adaptation to climate change, will be placing all their efforts into producing more and more plastics.
- I was for some years a member of a small group which runs the Elmer Tarr Roadside Litter Pickup in Bristol each year. This group mobilizes residents, businesses and non-profits in our town to walk the roads of Bristol collecting trash. And we can tell you that there is no shortage of plastic trash that is found each year. And we know all too well that what these good citizens collect is only a tiny percentage of the plastic trash that is being generated by our wasteful systems of product manufacturing. I should also mention that my group was formerly an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful (KAB), which we were encouraged to join because we thought it fit well with our focus on litter. After a few years, however, we realized that KAB is really just a front group for manufacturers like Coca Cola, Anheuser Busch and others, whose goals were really to make consumers responsible and to reject their own responsibility for environmental stewardship. We subsequently terminated our relationship with KAB. These huge and extremely profitable corporations must be held to account.

For these reasons, LD 1423 must be defeated. Thank you.