



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1423

Presented by: Mariel Geiger

Climate Action Chair & Policy Lead, Surfrider Foundation Maine Chapter

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Good afternoon Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and esteemed members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Mariel Geiger, and I am the Climate Action Chair and Policy Lead for the Surfrider Foundation Maine Chapter, here today to testify in **strong opposition of LD 1423**.

As we reflect on yesterday's 55th anniversary of **Earth Day**, I can't think of a more timely moment to underscore the importance of staying the course on Maine's Extended Producer Responsibility law for packaging. This past Saturday, with 44 community volunteers, we removed over 1500 pounds of trash and toxic debris from waterways, roadsides and riverbanks. This was a stark reminder that despite decades of focus, we are falling short of effectively solving this critically challenging issue. While we understand that this is a complex issue with many moving parts, it's very clear that we need a more effective and comprehensive strategy. Not only is this EPR law a product of years of collaborative work—but it represents a bold step toward a more sustainable, equitable future for Maine's environment, economy and its people. It represents the aforementioned *'more effective and comprehensive strategy'*.

At Surfrider, our mission is to **protect and enjoy the world's ocean, waves, and beaches** through a powerful activist network. In Maine, that mission translates into tireless work to defend our coastlines and keep our waterways clean. Through regular cleanups and ongoing debris monitoring, we've continuously documented the **sheer volume of toxic and non-recyclable packaging waste** that ends up in our oceans and along our shores. It's not just unsightly—it's dangerous to marine life, harmful to human health, and costly for local communities to manage.

LD 1423 threatens to derail a program that's ready to deliver real, systemic change. It would weaken key components of the law before implementation has even begun—**delaying relief to municipalities** and undermining accountability for the companies that create this waste in the first place.

LD1423 introduces **broad industry exemptions** and vague technical loopholes that would allow large corporations to sidestep responsibility while Maine taxpayers continue to foot the bill. It **shifts power away from the DEP and into the hands of industry**, removes transparency, and dilutes definitions that are critical to environmental protection and public health.

This is not the time to turn back. Maine's EPR law is strong, fair, and designed to evolve with regular assessments and input from stakeholders. It has already been through a comprehensive public rulemaking process. **We must honor that process and defend the progress we've made.**

On behalf of the Surfrider Foundation and our members across Maine, I urge you to oppose LD 1423. Let's stand with our municipalities, protect our coastlines and interior, and keep Maine a national leader in environmental policy.

As always, thank you very much for all of your hard work and continued dedication to protecting Maine's environment, resources and future.

Mariel Geiger | Maine Chapter Climate Action Chair and Policy Lead
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Protecting & preserving the world's oceans, beaches and coastline!