



Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 1423, An Act to Improve Recycling by Updating the Stewardship Program for Packaging

By
Mark Draper, Solid Waste Director
Aroostook Waste Solutions

April 23, 2025

Good afternoon Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in opposition to L.D. 1423. Aroostook Waste Solutions is a not-for-profit corporation owned by the municipalities of Fort Fairfield, Limestone, Caribou, and Presque Isle that provides solid waste disposal services for approximately 70% of the Aroostook County population, and operates a drop off recycling program for 14 local communities.

AWS has supported the development of Maine's EPR for Packaging initiative since it was first introduced during the 129th legislature in 2018. We have followed this process closely and provided comments during multiple legislative efforts, and during the rulemaking process before the Board of Environmental Protection. Interspersed within those formal activities, the Department facilitated many informal stakeholder sessions to seek input on the program's development. Frankly, in my 30 years of working in the solid waste management field, I cannot recall an initiative that facilitated more opportunity for public input than this one.

Meanwhile, seven (7) years later, AWS continues to operate our recycling program at substantial cost to the taxpayers in the communities we serve. As my Board of Directors keeps eyeing these costs, I remind them that the potential for some relief may be coming with implementation of the EPR for Packaging program in Maine, and that we should stay the course until we see what benefits it provides.

Now, as the program is in the final stages of development and implementation is scheduled for next year, along comes a legislative proposal to significantly modify the original statute that will likely result in two (2) things. First, it would essentially water down the effectiveness of the program, and second, if passed, likely will result in further delays in the program's implementation. The program as it currently exists already provides the DEP with authorization to consider requests for exemptions; and opportunities to evaluate the program's effectiveness and make changes have been built-in.

In summary, over the past 7 years Maine has developed a robust program to assist municipalities with managing packaging waste in the State. The DEP led an extremely inclusive effort to develop that program, and should be commended for doing so. The time is now to finally move forward with its' implementation.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to provide our perspective.