

Testimony of Pat Ianni, Falmouth, ME, In Opposition to
LD 1423 – An Act to Improve Recycling by Updating the Stewardship Program for Packaging
Before the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
April 23, 2025

I am a resident of Falmouth. In my capacity as an environmental scientist for almost four decades, I worked primarily in the areas of hazardous waste investigation, site remediation, waste minimization, waste management and regulatory compliance. Throughout my career, I became well aware of the unnecessary and costly problems caused by the production, generation and disposal of solid wastes and the adverse impacts caused from “cradle to grave”. Many of those wastes include packaging materials – some of which contain hazardous chemical constituents. Perhaps more importantly, many of these packaging wastes are absolutely unnecessary. For anyone trying to purchase food and household products at a typical grocery store, it is almost impossible to meet simple needs of a consumer without buying multiple layers of unnecessary packaging. The situation we currently find ourselves in regarding the overproduction and management of wastes in this state (and our country) has led us to create this novel Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging. Other countries have led the way with this type of program, but Maine was the first state in this country to enact this type of law. I was thrilled to participate in the many legislative hearings over several years that resulted in the passage of Maine’s EPR for Packaging law.

As I am sure you already know, the purpose of this EPR for packaging law is three-fold –

- To reduce the financial burdens on municipalities who ultimately incur the costs of disposal of these packaging wastes.
- To reduce the amount of unnecessary solid waste (i.e., packaging materials) entering our state.
- **To encourage product manufacturers to use less overall packaging and to shift to more readily recyclable packaging materials.**

It is this last purpose that I would like to emphasize. While the supporters of this bill would like you to focus on the “burdens” that the existing law places on them, I would suggest they direct their energies toward reducing the amount of packaging materials they use in wrapping their products and shifting to more recyclable packaging materials. We have, in the past, lived without all this unnecessary packaging and we can return to those practices. Consumers do not want these excessive and unnecessary materials.

The existing EPR for Packaging law and forthcoming rules are doing exactly what they were intended to accomplish. Please do not delay the implementation of this program. Please do not expand the exemptions (which will shift the costs to the Maine towns and small businesses). Please vote Ought Not to Pass for LD 1423.