



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1928:

“An Act to Prohibit Lodging Establishments from Providing Single-Use Plastic Containers”

Senator Tepler, Representative Gramlich, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Harris Van Pate and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free-market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to LD 1928.

This bill proposes banning small, single-use plastic containers for personal health or beauty products in Maine lodging establishments. While well-intentioned, this policy represents another unnecessary and heavy-handed mandate that will burden Maine’s hospitality industry, particularly our rural small businesses, while offering little demonstrable environmental benefit.

Government Overreach Harms Small Businesses

LD 1928 is a textbook example of government overreach. It imposes top-down restrictions on private businesses that are already motivated to adopt sustainable practices voluntarily. The hospitality industry, especially in Maine’s seasonal tourism economy, has been under significant pressure recently from labor shortages and rising costs to regulatory burdens and inflation. Forcing every lodging operator, from small inns to bed-and-breakfasts, to revamp their supply chains and adopt refillable or non-plastic alternatives is costly, especially for those operating on limited margins.

Maine’s tourism industry is already facing strain, but this bill would further increase the costs this industry faces. While the bill exempts certain small-scale establishments, it arbitrarily targets businesses based solely on their number of units without considering their financial capacity or existing waste-reduction initiatives.

Unproven Environmental Impact

There is little credible evidence that banning single-use plastic toiletry containers in lodging establishments will significantly reduce plastic pollution in Maine. These items represent a minuscule fraction of plastic waste, especially compared to packaging for retail, shipping, or even the food service industry.

Rather than pursuing symbolic policies that create compliance headaches for businesses, Maine should focus on strategies with proven results: investing in waste



management infrastructure, incentivizing private innovation in biodegradable materials, and educating consumers.

One-Size-Fits-All Solutions Ignore Innovation

Many large hotel chains have already begun voluntarily shifting away from single-use containers, driven by consumer demand and corporate sustainability goals. For instance, major brands have adopted wall-mounted dispensers or larger refillable containers in guest bathrooms. The free market is clearly moving in the direction of reduced plastic use, and these organic innovations are more sustainable and more adaptable than coercive legislation.

LD 1928 would override these market-driven adaptations, replacing them with rigid mandates that stifle flexibility and innovation, especially among smaller operators without access to bulk purchasing or custom infrastructure.

Maine Should Prioritize Freedom and Practicality

The most effective public policies protect individual freedom, respect property rights, and empower voluntary action over coercion. LD 1928 does the opposite—it micromanages how businesses may provide basic amenities to their guests and sets the stage for further regulatory creep into operational decisions that should be left to entrepreneurs based on the needs of their consumers.

Conclusion

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to reject LD 1928. Let's allow Maine's hospitality businesses to make their own decisions on sustainable practices, foster innovation, and focus on practical environmental solutions, not mandates that burden our economy with little benefit to show. Thank you for your time and consideration.