



Town of Orono

Testimony of the Town of Orono
Offered by Cheryl Robertson, Town Councilor

In Support of LD 1541

"An Act To Support and Improve Municipal Recycling Programs and Save Taxpayer Money"

May 10, 2021

To the Honorable Stacy Brenner, Senate Chair, Honorable Ralph Tucker, House Chair, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

On behalf of the Town of Orono, as an Orono Town Councilor, I submit testimony in favor of supporting an "ought to pass" vote for LD 1541, in addition, not to support LD 1471, a much less robust and comprehensive bill, to address recycling issues in our municipality.

In February of this year, Orono Town Council, supported by Orono residents, voted to uphold a Recycling and Reform Resolution and through this resolution also supported an Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging law.

Orono believes that LD 1541 promotes having a shared responsibility between producers and consumers for recycled waste is a more equitable way to ensure that fluctuating and high municipal costs for recycling and disposing of municipal solid waste does not fall solely on the public taxpayer.

Orono is challenged by having one of the highest mil rates in the state; however, as we continue to provide services that enable our residents to have a safe and healthy quality of life, revenue is critical. We recognize that a producer stewardship program will not ameliorate the high cost of waste management, but it will increase a revenue stream that will help offset recycling costs. Destabilized recycling markets have forced some towns and cities to discontinue their recycling programs; Orono has resolved to continue to provide this service to its residents as a matter of principle and best environmental practice.

We also support LD 1541 as it asks big corporations to do their fair share in ensuring long-term viability of recycling while at the same time allows fair and reasonable exemptions for small businesses. Supporting small businesses in our community is also crucial - it creates economic development in an environmentally healthy environment which will in turn attract businesses and families to our community.

Over the past 20 years, Maine has already adopted eight other successful EPR programs to recycle used electronic waste, old paint, and mercury thermostats. There are 33 states with 120 EPR laws across fourteen product categories. Mainers are often first in the nation with innovative and creative policies and solutions to often much more complex issues. We believe LD 1541 gives relief to taxpayers, creates a more sustainable, non-taxpayer-funded and equitable recycling program, and protects the beautiful state and community we live in by keeping producers of packaging accountable in these particularly fluctuating global recycling markets.

The Town of Orono supports LD 1541, and appeals to our State Legislators to also vote to support LD 1541 to curb waste and to support Maine taxpayers. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.