



MAINE BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION

**Testimony of Newell Augur
Director
Maine Beverage Association**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

In Support of LD 2134, An Act Regarding Responsibility for Activities Intended to Increase the Use of Refillable and Reusable Beverage Containers

January 24, 2024

Good morning, Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Newell Augur. I am a resident of Yarmouth and a lawyer with Pierce Atwood. I represent the members of the Maine Beverage Association, your local distributors of a variety of refreshing products including diet soda, soda, juices, sports drinks and water. I am here to testify in support of LD 2134, An Act Regarding Responsibility for Activities Intended to Increase the Use of Refillable and Reusable Beverage Containers.

We appreciate Representative Hepler for submitting this bill and for her continued engagement and interest in reducing inefficiencies in the bottle bill. This bill makes a small, but important, adjustment to the reform law passed last year. It honors the agreement made between all the stakeholders involved in that discussion regarding a new program for refillable and reusable beverage containers by putting that program and the funding for it under the direction of the cooperative rather than the DEP. The DEP retains direction and funding of the new Cost and Carbon Efficient Technology Fund.

As part of its World Without Waste initiative, Coca-Cola set a goal to have at least 25% of all its beverages sold in reusable glass, plastic, or refillable fountain containers by 2030. Similarly, PepsiCo intends to increase the percentage of all beverage servings delivered through reusable models from 10 to 20 percent by 2030. Through its Ready Refresh brand, Blue Triton Poland Spring already provides a wide range of beverage choices for homes and businesses including its eco-friendly 5 gallon reusable container. As these programs and those of other beverage distributors – both national and local - are implemented, having these initiatives centralized through the cooperative will enhance the coordination and effectiveness of refillable and reusable programs in Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'd be happy to answer any questions.