

## Testimony Against LD 231: An Act to Update the Solid Waste Management Hierarchy

Chair Senator Denise Tepler, Chair Representative Victoria Doudera and distinguished members of the committee,

My name is Jane Herbert. I live in Damariscotta. I am here to express my strong opposition to LD 231, "An Act to Update the Solid Waste Management Hierarchy." This bill, by increasing reliance on waste incineration, raises serious environmental, public health, and financial concerns.

The Maine Solid Waste Management Hierarchy has been modeled after the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection's waste management framework. All the states in New England are aligning with this well-established framework.

The difficulties Maine has faced in efforts to control the importation and land-filling of waste from out of state raises concerns about prioritizing incineration. Burning of waste from over seas has been the practice at the Orrington facility, PERC. Waste to energy facilities create an incentive for more waste creation which is contrary to the goal of waste reduction. Additionally incineration of waste releases harmful pollutants, including heavy metals, dioxins, and particulate matter, all of which pose serious risks to human health. The claim that incineration is a sustainable energy source is misleading, as it ignores the substantial environmental damage and long-term costs associated with this method.

Incineration does reduce the volume of waste and relieve the burden on landfill capacity. However, the ash produced by incineration contains concentrated toxic substances, and should be disposed of responsibly in hazardous waste landfills. These landfills are expensive to create and maintain, and they present significant environmental and public health risks. By increasing reliance on incineration, Maine will face growing costs related to hazardous waste disposal, which will ultimately burden taxpayers and local communities.

Incineration does hold promise for the future but in light

of current practices it is premature to prioritize incineration above composting and recycling. Moving away from the current waste management hierarchy risks putting Maine out of step with efforts to build more sustainable waste management systems and shifting Maine to disposal-centric policies.

In contrast, zero waste strategies—such as reducing consumption, reusing materials, and increasing recycling and composting—address the root causes of waste generation and are aligned with the goal of reducing waste at its source. I urge you to continue to prioritize policies that promote waste reduction, recycling, and composting, which protect public health, reduce environmental harm, and reduce long-term costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. **I respectfully ask the committee vote unanimously not to pass LD 231** and continue to work toward policies that protect Maine's renowned natural environment and ensure a healthier future for all its residents.

Sincerely,  
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