



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Quentin Chapman introducing
**L.D. 479, An Act to Facilitate Expansion of the State's Recycling Efforts
Under the Beverage Container Redemption Program**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
February , 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and esteemed members of the Environment and Natural Resources committee, I am Quentin Chapman, proudly representing House District 88 in Auburn. I am proud to present L.D. 479, "An Act to Expand the States Recycling Efforts Under the Beverage Container Program."

The bill before you today would add a .05¢ deposit on all grocery consumer glass. Peppercini's, pickles or soy sauce, all consumer products found in a grocery store. By adding a deposit to glass products we would encourage people to recycle, this would reduce the amount of waste going into landfills and the ocean. The problem I am looking to solve is that over 9 million tons of glass are put into the landfill each year. This despite being 100% recyclable, additionally glass has no known limit on the number of times it can be recycled. Glass is environmentally friendly and imparts no contaminants to food or beverage.

I am aware of the Maine's stewardship program and of the work that municipalities and MERF's (Material Recovery Facilities) do now and will do in the future. Glass items cause issues in the recycling chain however, it is heavy, expensive to ship, it breaks and causes contamination by mixing in with other materials. It creates difficulties with conveyors and recycling sort systems. The MERF's are not at this time, from what I understand, separating glass by color. There is added value to color separated glass.

Furthermore deposit programs have been proven to be successful at increasing recycling rates and reducing litter. Deposit programs help people learn to

separate recyclables from other waste. Do to its weight it can be cheaper than collecting and disposing of along side of regular waste.

As for setting up and managing the program, grocers and food distributors need only look to the beverage industry that has been participating successfully for more than forty years. Grocers already navigate the deposit on returnables when they sell water, soda, beer and wine amongst other products. This doesn't seem a monumental task but potentially a monumental outcome.

Despite being 100% recyclable over 9 million tons of glass are put into the landfills annually. Maine is one of the best Recyclers in the nation but has a little more work to do. The implementation of the Stewardship for Packing will make a big difference. However the redemption program versus curbside recycling results in less contamination contributing to a higher quality recycled material.

Based on industry data, CRI (Container Recycling Institute) calculated the U.S. recycling rate for aluminum beverage cans on deposit as 74 percent and the rate for cans not on deposit as 26 percent (2021 data).Feb 3, 2025

Between 2018 and 2022, the amount of municipal solid waste landfilled in Maine shot up 47 percent, from 388,629 tons in 2018 to 569,911 tons in 2022, according to a report released in early January by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

In 2021, Maine sent roughly 903,660 tons of trash to landfills, a significant increase from the 721,646 tons in 2017, and the state's recycling rate decreased from 38.1% to 33.7% during that same period.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

- **Increased Waste Disposal:**

The amount of municipal solid waste landfilled in Maine increased by 47% between 2018 and 2022, from 388,629 tons to 569,911 tons.

- **Recycling Rates Decline:**

The estimated recycling rate in Maine dropped from 38.1% in 2017 to 33.7% in 2021.

- **Per Capita Disposal Rate:**

The state's per capita disposal rate (waste sent to landfills or waste-to-energy plants) was almost 0.7 tons during 2020 and 2021, exceeding the state's goal of less than 0.55 tons per person.

- **Maine's Waste Goals:**

Maine's statutory goal is to reduce the per capita disposal rate to 0.55 tons by January 1, 2019, and further reduce it by 5% every 5 years.

- **Waste Generation:**

In 2018 and 2019, Maine generated an estimated 2,625,870 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW), with approximately 1,667,376 tons sent for disposal, and 958,494 tons diverted through recycling, composting, and other methods.

- **Landfill Capacity:**

Maine has roughly 40 operating landfills, nine of which are licensed to accept municipal solid waste.

- **Out-of-State Waste:**

Slightly less than a third of the waste coming into the Crossroads facility (the state's only commercially owned landfill) is from out of state, raising concerns about capacity and the state's ability to manage its own waste.

- **Legislative Efforts:**

Lawmakers have recently passed legislation, including a plastic bag ban and a restriction on out-of-state demolition waste, to address the waste problem.

Bar Harbor town council voted 5-1 to stop recycling glass and asked residents to throw it in the trash instead. The reason? The constant crashing of glass into the bins was too noisy for neighbors of the transfer station, according to the Mount Desert Islander.

Councilors figured the glass would eventually be sorted out and recycled anyway at the new facility in Hampden, which was slated to open later that year.

But that never happened. The Hampden facility remains closed, and Bar Harbor's glass — one of the world's most readily recyclable materials — is being buried in the landfill at Juniper Ridge, 66 miles north.