

Alexander Cole's Testimony in support of LD 1035

Good morning Senator Tepler and Representative Doudera and honorable members of the environment and natural resources committee.

My name is Alexander Cole. I proposed the concept for this bill to Representative Rana.

I am an engineer at the University of Maine, a lifelong Mainer, and an outdoor enthusiast.

I use a fair amount of propane when I'm camping or fishing, either to stay warm or to cook food on a camping stove. After a few years, those little camping gas canisters started piling up in my garage: you know, the tiny green Coleman ones. I started wondering, how do I get rid of these? Thus began the propane tank rabbit hole.

You'd likely recognize a 20lb propane tank: it's the white-colored tank you would normally use for a household grill- those are rated to be refilled, and reusable; you can swap used ones for new ones at basically any gas station. There's a system for them.

But the tiny green ones are a different story, because while these "camping gas" tanks might be painted green, there's nothing "green" about them. To my discovery, there is virtually no mechanism for disposing of these tanks; tanks with highly explosive gas. These tanks are sold in 12 packs at Walmart, and are designed to be single-use. Disposable.

There's little to no guidance on where to put them. The closest hazardous waste disposal site to Bangor, which is in Lewiston, won't accept them unless you puncture them first, which is already dangerous. You can't legally refill them. The absolute best case scenario is that these little cans end up in a landfill. Considering that an estimated 60 million of these are sold in the United States each year, I think it's worth asking: where are they all going?

This issue has bothered me for a long time. I'd personally argue that we should ban the sale of single-use propane tanks altogether, but I recognize that we need to start somewhere. And the study proposed by this bill is certainly a good start.

Thank you.