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April 7, 2025

Testimony of Rep. Sally Cluchey introducing
**LD 1165, An Act to Create a Fund for Safe Disposal of Hazardous Fluids from
Salvage Yards**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sally Cluchey, and I represent House District 52, which includes the communities of Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, and Richmond.

I'm here today to introduce **LD 1165, An Act to Create a Fund for Safe Disposal of Hazardous Fluids from Salvage Yards**. This Vehicle Fluid Waste Fund will support small but essential vehicle salvage businesses in Maine and protect our environment. This bill addresses a critical challenge faced by these businesses — the high cost of safely disposing of hazardous vehicle fluids.

Salvage yards play a silent but critical role in Maine's vehicle life cycle. They act as the necessary in-between step before a vehicle can be crushed or scrapped. That step involves safely removing and disposing of hazardous fluids — such as old gasoline, antifreeze, and waste oil — and while salvage businesses do their best to reuse or repurpose these fluids, the reality is that they often can't. Especially in the case of older or flooded vehicles, these fluids are often unusable and must be disposed of as hazardous waste.

Businesses in this industry can't store fluids indefinitely. There are strict state and federal limits on how much fluid they can keep onsite. Once they reach those limits they must dispose of the fluids — often at a cost nearly equal to the original price of the fluids themselves. This cost is an expensive burden on salvage businesses, and they are unable to pass these disposal costs onto consumers in the way auto repair shops do.

Right now, we have about 300 licensed salvage businesses in Maine, but only about 50 to 100 of them are actively operating. The used parts market has declined due to the ease of purchasing new parts online, and without support, more of these businesses will close. When this happens, end-of-life vehicles

will be abandoned in backyards, fields, or woods, leaking fluids into the soil and water, which poses an environmental risk.

The intent of this bill is to make it easier for salvage businesses to continue operating responsibly by providing a fund that helps them cover the cost of disposing of hazardous vehicle fluids. The fund will be supported by a one-time \$100 fee on new automobile sales. The Department of Environmental Protection will administer the fund and create the rules once the fund has enough revenue to do so, ensuring a streamlined, sustainable process.

By supporting this bill, we're helping small businesses stay in business and, at the same time, protecting Maine's environment. It's a common-sense approach that allows these businesses to do the right thing by making it financially feasible for them to dispose of hazardous fluids in an environmentally responsible way.

Thank you for your consideration.