



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Stacy Brenner introducing
LD 1065, An Act Regarding the Reduction and Recycling of Food Waste
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

April 16, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and esteemed colleagues of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I'm Senator Stacy Brenner, proudly representing Senate District 30, which includes all of Gorham and most of Scarborough. Today, I'm honored to introduce LD 1065—legislation designed to ensure Maine's largest food waste generators divert food waste from landfills, aligning directly with our climate and waste reduction goals.

First, let's set the stage: Maine remains the only state in New England without a law requiring large-scale food waste generators to divert their waste from disposal. Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island, Connecticut—and yes, even New Hampshire—have all successfully enacted similar laws. Massachusetts, for example, has effectively diverted over 380,000 tons of food waste annually. Vermont saw its food donations nearly triple within three years of passing its organics recycling law. The success stories from our neighbors clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of such legislation in reducing methane emissions and creating new economic opportunities in composting, anaerobic digestion, and food donation networks.

Second, the urgency of this legislation cannot be overstated. Food waste is the single largest component of Maine's waste stream. Shockingly, a third of our food supply is wasted even as thousands of Mainers go hungry—a moral imperative we simply must address. Additionally, food waste, when landfilled, generates methane, a greenhouse gas with 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over 20 years. Addressing food waste is central to Maine's climate strategy, as outlined in our Maine Won't Wait climate action plan. The EPA has identified food waste reduction as "essential" to meeting our climate targets. Simply put, Maine cannot achieve its environmental goals without tackling food waste.

Third, LD 1065 is intentionally limited to ease implementation. It applies exclusively to the largest generators of food waste—such as major grocery stores, institutional kitchens, larger hotels, universities, and hospitals. Smaller mom-and-pop businesses, municipalities, and households are completely exempt. Furthermore, recognizing the geographic realities of our state, the bill exempts large generators located beyond a 20-25 mile radius of a composting or anaerobic digestion facility with available capacity. To further alleviate potential burdens, the Department of Environmental Protection may grant hardship waivers valid for up to three years.

This legislation isn't entirely new—it builds on substantial groundwork previously laid, particularly LD 1009, introduced by Representative Ziegler in the last session, which was



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rigorously vetted but unfortunately stalled on the appropriations table. LD 1065 incorporates and improves upon that language, offering us a polished, ready-to-go path forward.

As someone who has previously chaired this committee, I've listened intently to the debates, the concerns, and the ideas around food waste. LD 1065 reflects that cumulative knowledge and thoughtful deliberation. It's strategic, manageable, and urgently needed.

Finally, speaking personally as a farmer deeply committed to nurturing healthy, nutrient-rich soil, this bill significantly enhances Maine's food waste hierarchy. Returning food scraps back to the earth as compost isn't merely waste diversion—it represents nutrient recycling, climate resilience, and smart agriculture.

And as a business owner, the economic impacts are just as compelling. Massachusetts saw immediate job creation—more than 900 jobs in the first two years alone, alongside \$175 million in economic activity and over \$5 million in new state and local tax revenue. Infrastructure investments naturally follow policies like LD 1065, creating stable demand and catalyzing growth in Maine's recycling and composting sectors. I know that Exeter Agri-Energy has 100,000 tons of capacity and they are currently using only half of that. Anaerobic digestion represents a significant opportunity for Maine to keep food waste out of landfills while also expanding jobs.

Colleagues, LD 1065 presents an extraordinary opportunity. It tackles climate change, addresses hunger, bolsters local agriculture, and fosters economic development. This is a common-sense step forward, tailored thoughtfully for Maine.

I respectfully urge the committee to join me and vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1065. Let's keep food where it truly belongs: feeding people, feeding animals, nourishing our soils, or generating energy—not rotting in landfills.

Thank you very much, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Stacy Brenner
State Senator, District 30