



Maine Conservation Voters

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Testimony in support of LD1065, *An Act Regarding the Reduction and Recycling of Food Waste*

April 16, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Cathy Breen. I am the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters (MCV), a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters that is building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I'm speaking today in support of **LD1065, *An Act Regarding the Reduction and Recycling of Food Waste***.

I'd like to start with MCV's gratitude for the *many decades* of dedication this committee and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) have demonstrated in developing solid waste systems that keep our communities as clean as possible and do the least environmental harm as practicable. By developing and enacting the Solid Waste Hierarchy in statute in 1989,¹ the state has guided municipalities in best practices in waste management for over 35 years. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Compost, Incinerate, Landfill. In addition, the state enacted another overarching statute in 2007, "It is the policy of the State to actively promote and encourage waste reduction measures from all sources and maximize waste diversion efforts by encouraging new and expanded uses of solid waste generated in this State as a resource."² MCV has supported this work and will continue to do so.

LD1065 aligns with that last sentence because it encourages new and expanded use of food waste generated in the state and suggests transforming it and using it as a resource. According to a recent study commissioned by the Maine DEP, 40% of waste in Maine is organic, and approximately 361,000 tons of food loss and waste are generated annually in Maine.³ Should this bill pass, beginning in 2027, a designated food waste generator may not dispose of its generated food waste at an incineration facility or solid waste landfill and must to the maximum extent practicable **reduce** the volume of food waste it generates, separate and arrange for the donation of excess edible food (**reuse**) and manage the remaining food waste it generates

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dep/sustainability/sw-hierarchy.html>

² <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/38/title38sec2101.html>

³ https://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/publications/documents/ME%20DEP%20Food%20Loss%20and%20Waste%20Generation%20Study_RRS_4.1.29.pdf

through agricultural use, composting or anaerobic digestion at the point of generation, at a different location or by transferring the food waste to an organics recycler for management (**compost**).

As you may know, some municipalities and large institutions have already implemented food waste diversion and composting programs. In some cases they've partnered with private companies, and in others they've developed their own capacity. And that's all good! But Maine is the only state in New England that has not developed a statewide food waste diversion program, and we'd like to see that happen.

MCV is also very committed to meeting the climate crisis before us, and that's another reason to support this bill. In addition to waste management benefits, LD1065 supports Maine's efforts to address climate change. Food in landfills generates methane emissions, which are potent greenhouse gases that contribute to warming temperatures and extreme weather events. By reducing food waste that enters landfills, this bill supports Maine's statutory goal of carbon neutrality by 2045.

For all of these reasons, MCV urges you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD1065. Thank you for your consideration.