



Maine Beverage Distributors Association

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LD 1721, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Commingling of Beverage Containers.

April 22, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources, my name is Cheryl Timberlake. I am a resident of Mt. Vernon and serve as the Executive VP for the Maine Beverage Distributors Association, whose members are local family-owned independent distributors that provide beer, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages to retailers from every region of the state.

MBDA is testifying Neither For Nor Against LD 1721, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Commingling of Beverage Containers. MBDA finds our positions to be in conflict on several sections of the proposal.

First, we appreciate the changes in Section 3 that update the material type sorts for the program. Statute currently defines material sorts for commingled containers as plastics, aluminum, other metal, and glass. These are set out in statute as the *maximum number* of allowable material sorts for commingled containers.

While the statute is intending to set a limit of 4 material sorts, these are not reflective of the marketplace. Beverage container sorting in practice is more than the four defined categories and these current sorting limits could jeopardize the recycling of some of these materials.

To accommodate the inconsistencies between statute and practice Section 3 expands the number of allowable material type sorts to ensure that material can be recycled as the statute intends.

For example, there are at least 3 glass color sorts for beer (amber/brown; clear/flint -Twisted Tea; and green/blue – Heineken); and another 2 glass sorts for wine/spirits (clear; green/brown) with bottle styles and colors.

We want to express our concerns with Section 1 Obligation to preserve container value. The statute requires that material value be maintained. The policy goal is to ensure that recyclable materials stay out of the landfills. Glass is a recyclable commodity.

To ensure the value of the glass, we request that redemption centers separate glass by color. Subsection 6 **removes the obligation** for RVMs, or account based bulk processing program to adhere to the commingling agreements or cooperative plan approved in accordance with statute – sort glass by colors.

Why would the statute provide two different standards? Separation of glass by color sorts is imperative to preserve the container value. All parties should adhere to this standard. Glass is expensive to recycle, and contaminated glass adds more cost to the recycling effort.

We understand that RVM machines may have the capability to sort by glass, and that these machines exist in other states. For example, NY has an optical scanner for identifying product types.

If the technology is available outside of Maine to fulfill these sorting obligations to preserve the container value, let's ensure that all entities adhere to the same standard. Manual sorts by redemption centers and RVM processes should be unified.

The addition of the recycling value sentence midway through Section 6 also causes us concern.

The recycling value of a beverage container includes but is not limited to commodity, transportation and proportional system cost savings."

As pick-up agents, MBDA has trucks all over the state to service manual redemption centers, and you can only hold so much crushed glass weight in a truck. Does the transportation cost for these pickups bring value to the recyclability of the container?

What other "system cost savings" are being requested and to whose benefit?

The MBDA appreciates the opportunity to present these comments.