



April 23,2025

Good afternoon, Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Jed Whiting, I am a resident of Stratton and am presenting testimony today in support of LD 1423, "An Act to Improve Recycling by Updating the Stewardship Program for Packaging."

I represent Fontaine, Inc. We own and operate 2 soft wood lumber mills in Maine, one in Stratton, and another in Jackman. We employ 150 people between the two facilities.

A well-designed Extended Producer Responsibility program has the potential to be good for Maine's forest products industry by creating opportunities for new packaging products like molded fiber, a sustainable alternative to plastic. We feel that the current design of the program has some issues that must be addressed.

- 1) The definition of "consumer" currently applies to manufacturers, which will require them to pay fees associated to each step of the manufacturing process. Having to pay multiple fees will put them at a competitive disadvantage compared to out-of-state manufacturers.
- 2) There should be an "off-ramp" by providing incentives associated with materials with a high level of being recycled. This will promote the use of Maine forest products.
- 3) The DEP list of material classes and types does not include molded fiber, nor does it recognize paper as being compostable.

We are supportive of LD 1423 and we appreciate all the hard work that went into drafting it, but we feel these items need to be addressed. Without doing so, the program could have a negative effect on Maine's forest product industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

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