

Apr 23, 2025
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
LD 1423
Testimony delivered by Laura Marston

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, members Committee, thank you for considering my testimony today - I am here to oppose LD1423 and I hope you will too.

My name is Laura Marston, I'm the owner of GoGo Refill, Maine's first plastic-free refill shop, also a member of Reuse Maine. I'm here because I care very much about plastic pollution. I'm here representing the many Mainers who care enough to reduce their personal waste, while at the same time large corporations and producers - the polluters - are passing the buck to Maine towns to pay for the disposal of their packaging.

I have to be honest. I'm not glad to be here today, I'm not glad to take time away from my business during a busy week - I'm not glad to be missing a day of my kids' school vacation. We've been here before. I'm sure many of you remember 2021, sitting on zoom for a marathon 6.5 hours of testimony - overwhelmingly in support of EPR for packaging. You heard testimony from voters, hundreds of us, begging for accountability to be placed on the producers - the ones who make the profits, and the ones who make the decisions about the packaging that takes up 40% of our waste stream.

During the testimony 4 years ago we all learned that EPR for packaging already exists on all continents, in the EU and in several provinces in Canada. Which is how we can prove that it does NOT in fact increase prices for consumers. And how we can prove that it increases recycling rates.

Over the past few years, the DEP, experts and stakeholders have worked together on rules that are fair, practical, and effective. This process has been transparent and public. I know because I've participated. Let's not throw the rules out now. Maine's EPR law is tough, which is why you see this last minute attempt to weaken, delay and erode it.

Today you've heard proponents of LD1423 ask for vague and ambiguous exemptions, loopholes for corporations, and off-ramps for product segments. The proponents you've heard from are all businesses who might soon have to pony up and take responsibility for their packaging waste. So it makes sense that they don't want our EPR law to go into effect as written, because they will have to pay or they will have to change. Here they are spinning up urgencies about increased prices, about double-paying, and about consistency. How about this for consistency - all producers selling products in Canada or Europe are already participating in an EPR for packaging system that is stricter than our proposed law.

I urge the committee to see LD1423 for what it is - an 11th hour attempt to pay less and keep the tax payers of Maine footing the bill. The people of Maine, and those who have worked tirelessly on this law, deserve to see it take effect - we deserve to shift the cost of packaging waste from Maine tax payers to those who profit from it.