



Environmental Priorities Coalition

Testimony in opposition to LD1423, *An Act to Improve Recycling by Updating the Stewardship Program for Packaging*

April 23, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment & Natural Resources, my name is Cathy Breen. I am the Director of Government Affairs at Maine Conservation Voters (MCV). Today I am speaking on behalf of the Environmental Priorities Coalition, an inclusive statewide alliance of 39 conservation, climate action, and public health organizations. Each year we collectively identify a slate of policy priorities to act on the climate crisis, further environmental justice, protect land, water, and wildlife, and cultivate healthy Maine communities. This bill is a defensive priority for the EPC for this session, meaning that all 39 members voted to oppose this bill because they had all worked together to enact it in years past. I'm speaking in opposition to **LD1423, *An Act to Improve Recycling by Updating the Stewardship Program for Packaging***

When I was growing up as the youngest of six children, I cannot recall a single time when my parents ever said, "You just made a big mess, but someone else is going to clean it up for you, so you don't need to worry about it." That just never happened. On the contrary, I was taught that it is my responsibility to clean up the messes that I make. And I bet you and most people in Maine were taught the same lesson. And that most Mainers have taught that same lesson to their children and their grandchildren as well, just as I have. That's what this bill is about. Do the folks who make the pollution pay to clean it up? Or are we going to keep Maine property taxpayers on the hook for messes they didn't make?

The Extended Producer Responsibility program for packaging (EPR-P) that this committee, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Maine Board of Environmental Protection (BEP) developed over the past 4 years has yet to take effect. Please honor the hard work that has taken place, with ample opportunity for stakeholder input, in public view. Towns and cities all over Maine supported the passage of this program in the 130th legislature. And they have since waited eagerly for its rollout so that they can get some relief from the rising costs of recycling, hauling and disposing of packaging in the waste stream. If you support property tax relief, then let the program begin *without* carving out a bunch of material that industry groups are trying to get exempted.

Proponents of this bill would like you to believe that this is a radical law that makes Maine an outlier. But similar EPR-P programs have already been implemented successfully in other industrialized economies like Europe and Canada. And so many other states are implementing EPR-P that the Recycling Partnership has already developed a free online assessment tool and guide available to the packaging industry and sponsored by The Aluminum Association, The American Forest & Paper Association, The Carton Council, the Can Manufacturers Institute, and the Association of Plastic Recyclers.¹ Moreover, EPR-P builds on existing producer responsibility programs that Maine already employs - paint stewardship, beverage container redemption, and the oil spill cleanup fund, to name a few. This is a common sense program informed by years of work by dedicated professionals and volunteers. And it's a bill that will lead to property tax relief in the communities that you represent. Please vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD1423. Thank you for your consideration:

¹ <https://recyclingpartnership.org/circular-packaging-assessment/>