

**Testimony of Ashley Luszczi**

**In Opposition to L.D. 1782, An Act to Require That the State Reimburse a Municipality for Costs Incurred for Responding to Issues Related to the State-Owned Juniper Ridge Landfill  
Before the Environment and Natural Resource Committee  
April 28, 2025**

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resource, my name is Ashley Luszczi. I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing a network of 5,000+ small to large businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to L.D. 1782, An Act to Require That the State Reimburse a Municipality for Costs Incurred for Responding to Issues Related to the State-Owned Juniper Ridge Landfill.

We recognize and appreciate the important role the City of Old Town plays in hosting the state-owned Juniper Ridge Landfill (JRL), a facility that is vital to Maine's waste management system. Additionally, we understand the local impacts that can result from this responsibility, and the desire to ensure adequate resources and responsiveness. Furthermore, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce strongly supports pragmatic efforts to improve our solid waste policies and the hierarchy to limit waste at landfills. However, we are concerned that L.D. 1782 establishes an unsustainable and problematic precedent.

Under current arrangements, the City of Old Town already receives a host fee, which is intended to compensate the municipality for the impacts associated with hosting JRL. This fee is the product of a negotiated agreement and serves as a predictable and structured financial tool to support local needs. We do not believe the Legislature should impose a fee and these specifics need to be addressed between the municipality and the state.

While it is always reasonable to revisit the adequacy of host fees through dialogue and negotiation, which has happened on several occasions over the course of the past two decades, the approach proposed in L.D. 1782 circumvents that framework. It introduces a new, duplicative reimbursement mechanism that is both open-ended and difficult to budget for. In doing so, it risks undermining the very purpose of the host fee agreement by creating uncertainty. Furthermore, it could set a precedent that would encourage similar reimbursement requests from other municipalities hosting state-owned assets or facilities.

This type of fiscal unpredictability is concerning – not just for the state budget – but for Maine's broader economic climate. Public-private partnerships and state-local arrangements must be governed by clear, consistent policies.

While we can sympathize with the intent behind this bill, we believe it ultimately undermines the appropriate process to address these concerns. We urge the Committee to oppose L.D. 1782 – preserving the integrity of the existing host fee model and avoiding a new precedent that could have far-reaching implications for the State of Maine and its economy.