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THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony from Senator Denise Tepler, presenting LD 474, "An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries"**  
February 25

Representative Doudera and distinguished fellow members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, I am Senator Denise Tepler, representing all 10 towns of Sagadahoc County and the Town of Dresden in Lincoln County. I am here today to present to you an amendment to L.D. 474, which now has the title, "An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries."

This bill began its life last session when Senator Bennett presented us with a bill to both ban single use vapes and study to establish an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for all types of batteries, including those embedded in vape pens. As Senator Bennett worked with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the bill, it became clear that creating such a bill would take time and a study was not needed as the DEP was ready to take on this project. We carried over Senator Bennett's bill, but the Department was not ready with their version of battery stewardship until after our deadline for carried over bills. Thus, we agreed not to pass L.D. 754 and transfer the Department's bill for battery stewardship to my placeholder concept draft.

As we try to both limit the amount of waster we are landfilling and prevent the fires that can result from certain types of batteries in our waste stream, this bill contributes a significant solution to both those problems. Battery producers will not be able to sell their products in Maine if they refuse to participate in some form of stewardship. The bill allows for a number of ways to fulfill this responsibility by the manufacturers. They can hire an existing stewardship organization, they can join with other manufacturers to create a joint stewardship program, or they can go it alone. Whichever route they choose, the DEP must approve their plan.

The program begins with stewardship of standalone portable or medium format batteries but by 2030 will cover embedded batteries as well. The bill defines the number of battery collection points and that each plan must have a method of collection, transportation, and environmentally sound waste processing.

This battery stewardship program developed by DEP is quite complex and questions regarding its various components would be best addressed by the experts who will follow me. I hope you see the value in this program in meeting our waste reduction goals and appreciate that the department is now ready to take on this additional work to keep Maine lands and waters clean and safe.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.