



Testimony in support of LD 474
An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries

Victor Horton, Executive Director
Maine Resource Recovery Association (MRRRA)
February 25, 2026

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources:

The Maine Resource Recovery Association (MRRRA) supports this bill.

We have spoken to many of our members and other interested parties. They are unanimous in support of this bill. This bill needs to pass.

We are able to present a letter of support on the Battery Stewardship bill.

Twenty Six individuals signed on including me. This is a staggering number with us being only able to get it out to folks late last week and the snowmageddon forecast which shut down the state on Monday.

I am pretty confident that this list would be much larger with more time.

Rechargeable Battery Recycling

MRRRA is happy with the inclusion of new battery chemistries in Maine's battery product stewardship program, as proposed by the bill.

We also hope that any interested entity can participate in the collections of the batteries.

It seems that section 7 C. and D. with regards to medium format and damaged and defective batteries does exclude participants if they do not also handle household hazardous waste.

Adding lithium ion rechargeable batteries and primary batteries now with embedded batteries later on is a great leap forward.

Having the financial responsibility of managing this material at the end of life remaining with the producers will go far in keeping the program reasonably priced and should garner participation.

Public Education is a must and needs to be at the forefront of the stewardship program.

Drop-off sites must be convenient in order to ensure participation from consumers.

Conclusions

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the Battery Stewardship Bill

To make these programs more effective, we recommend the following:

We support the proposal to modernize Maine's product stewardship program for batteries, especially the following provisions:

- o Inclusion of additional battery chemistries, ensuring full participation from battery manufacturers
- o Establishing central accumulation facilities for damaged or defective batteries, and providing proper collection bins and training to collection sites for safe and convenient disposal across the state
- o Require coordination between one or more stewardship organizations to facilitate collection for municipalities and consumers

Respectfully submitted,

Victor Horton

Maine Resource Recovery Association (MRRRA)

The Maine Resource Recovery Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1984 to promote professional and sustainable materials management practices across Maine. With over 160 municipal members, MRRRA supports the operation of 60 transfer stations and recycling centers. Through conferences, newsletters, and webinars, MRRRA provides ongoing education on waste regulations, emerging waste streams, and best practices. The organization also assists members in identifying markets for recyclable materials, further advancing Maine's commitment to environmental stewardship.



Letter of Support for LD 474: An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries

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MRRRA and our members strongly support LD 474, which will expand Maine's battery product stewardship program to include primary batteries and modern rechargeable batteries.

Across Maine, municipalities and solid waste facilities are increasingly managing discarded primary and rechargeable batteries that pose growing safety, environmental, and financial challenges. Fires at transfer stations, sorting facilities, and recycling centers caused by improperly disposed of batteries are becoming more frequent and more dangerous. At the same time, municipalities are bearing the costs of safe collection, handling, storage, and transportation of batteries without adequate producer support.

LD 474 Ensures Safety for the General Public and Solid Waste Workers

Solid waste management facilities across Maine and the country are increasingly experiencing fires caused by discarded batteries — particularly lithium-ion batteries that are damaged, crushed, or improperly disposed of in trash or recycling. These fires happen in collection trucks, at transfer stations, in materials recovery facilities, and during processing. Even small batteries can ignite when compacted or punctured. These incidents put solid waste employees at serious risk, particularly for smoke inhalation injuries and burns, and they strain local emergency response resources.

The risk extends beyond waste facilities. Without convenient, year-round collection infrastructure, residents may hold onto damaged or defective batteries while waiting for a local household hazardous waste event. Storing compromised batteries in homes, garages, or sheds increases the risk of residential fires. By requiring a comprehensive, producer-funded collection system with permanent, accessible drop-off locations, LD 474 improves safety not only for solid waste workers but for Maine families as well.

LD 474 Protects Critical Solid Waste Infrastructure

Maine's transfer stations, recycling facilities, and hauling fleets are essential public infrastructure. Battery fires threaten that infrastructure. Facilities are facing rising insurance premiums, and in some cases, concerns about continued insurability due to repeated fire incidents. The loss of a transfer station or materials recovery facility, even temporarily, would disrupt local and regional waste management systems, forcing longer hauling distances, increasing costs, and reducing operational capacity.

Fires also damage expensive equipment: compactors, loaders, balers, conveyors, trucks, and buildings. Repairs and downtime create ripple effects throughout the system. LD 474 helps mitigate these risks by reducing the number of batteries improperly entering the waste stream and by establishing safer, dedicated collection pathways. Protecting infrastructure protects both public investment and the continuity of essential services.

LD 474 Provides Necessary Financial Support for the Management of Batteries

To respond to growing battery fire risks, many facilities are already making significant and costly investments including fire suppression systems, enhanced detection technology, staff training, modified handling protocols, and specialized storage areas. These investments are necessary for safety but are currently borne by municipalities and taxpayers.

In addition, the cost of safe collection containers and shipping for batteries that are not covered under existing programs can be substantial. Municipalities often face difficult budget choices: spend more local dollars to provide safe collection options or risk more batteries ending up in trash and recycling streams where they pose fire hazards. LD 474 shifts the financial responsibility to producers and ensures that municipalities and other approved collection sites are reimbursed for reasonable participation costs. This provides long-term financial sustainability and relieves pressure on local taxpayers.

LD 474 Offers Convenient Collection Standards and Improves Education on Safe Battery Management

A successful battery stewardship program must be convenient and easy to understand. LD 474 establishes clear collection standards to ensure statewide access, including permanent collection opportunities in every county and additional access in population centers. It allows a range of collection site types, including retailers, transfer stations, solid waste facilities, and other convenient locations so that residents can incorporate battery recycling into their normal routines, whether during a shopping trip or on trash day at a local transfer station.

Including all producers in the program and minimizing "free riders" supports consistent, statewide education about how to properly manage all covered consumer battery types. When messaging is clear and uniform, residents are more likely to participate correctly. By pairing convenience standards with education and infrastructure investments, LD 474 makes safe battery management accessible, practical, and effective for Maine communities.

Conclusion

We, the undersigned municipalities, solid waste districts, household hazardous waste facilities, and waste management organizations, write in strong support of LD 474, *An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries*.

We urge the Committee to vote "Ought to Pass" and advance this important legislation to protect public safety, reduce municipal costs, and ensure responsible end-of-life management of batteries in Maine.

Respectfully submitted,

Victor Horton, Executive Director, Maine Resource Recovery Association
Mark Draper, Solid Waste Director, Aroostook Waste Solutions
Kathryn Oak, Environmental & Solid Waste Coordinator, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
Bea Johnson, Senior Environmental Outreach Coordinator, ecomaine
Vanessa Berry, Sustainable Maine Program Manager, Natural Resources Council of Maine
Josh Andrews, Transfer Station Manager, Town of Waterboro Maine
Trampas King, Town Manager, Town of Dexter Maine
George Buswell, Director, Penobscot County, Unorganized Territory
Ed Knightly, Transfer Station Manager, Town of Oxford
Lori Keefe, Office Administrator, Town of Garland
Wesley Arnold, Account Manager, North Coast Services
Carrie Kipfer, County Administrator, Lincoln County Recycling
Adam Daoust, Transfer Station Manager, Town of Vassalboro
Frederick Jacobs, Transfer Station Manager, Aroostook Valley Solid Waste Disposal District
Richard Anderson, Supervisor/Manager, Town of North Berwick
David Wright, Chair, Whitefield Solid Waste and Recycling Committee
Ray DeMoranville, Supervisor, Valley Recycling Facility
James D. Labbe, Facility Manager, Norway Paris Solid Waste
Joy M. Downing, Town Manager, Town of West Paris
Christopher Littlefield, Town Manager/Landfill Manager, Town of Hartland
Olivia Kunesh, Environmental Coordinator, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG)
Tony Carter, Unorganized Territory Manager / Oxford County, Oxford County Commission
Lewis Dubuque, Vice President, Northeast, National Waste & Recycling Association, Northern New England Chapter
Becky Secrest, Resident, Town of Greenwood
John Albertini, Retired MRRRA Member
Lucy Sullivan, Director of Communications, ecomaine