



# Maine Conservation Voters

*Inform. Vote. Protect.*

Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Legislative Director, Maine Conservation Voters

In support of LD 474

*“An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries”*

Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee

February 25, 2026

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the legislative director for Maine Conservation Voters. MCV is a statewide non-profit organization with 13,000 members and supporters building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I am here to testify in support of LD 474 *“An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries”*.

Product stewardship has a long history in Maine. From the bottle bill, which was passed in 1976 to the Extended Producer Responsibility bill that was passed in 2021. Maine is a leader when it comes to these programs. We even already have a battery stewardship program, which was passed in 1991, but it needs to be updated to include newer battery chemistries such as lithium batteries. This bill would do just that, update the program to make sure it includes the newer batteries that aren't currently managed under the program.

It is important that these batteries be included in a producer responsibility program. Right now, batteries are being disposed of in transfer stations and solid waste facilities. This poses significant risks to those facilities and the workers at those facilities as batteries can lead to fires if they are not properly disposed of or damaged. In a Bangor Daily News article from October of 2024, Eco Maine reported that they had at least 12 fires in their

facility in a one-year period due to lithium batteries. We need a system to safely dispose of these toxic devices<sup>1</sup>.

LD 474 will put the onus for the cost of disposal on the manufacturers, not municipalities, saving Maine taxpayers money. It will also help us conserve resources. Batteries are made out of finite resources that are expensive to extract, manufacture, and dispose of. Requiring recycling keeps these materials out of our already limited landfill space and helps limit the need for virgin materials.

We urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 474.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Valigra, L. (2024, October 15). These devices are hazardous waste, but there's nowhere to safely throw them out in Maine. Bangor Daily News. <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/10/14/maine-focus/maine-focus-environment/hazardous-waste-devices-no-safe-disposal-maine-joam4Ozk0w/>