



February 25, 2026

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Cross Building, Room 216
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Support for Amendment to LD 474 – ‘An Act to Establish a Stewardship Program for Primary and Rechargeable Batteries’

Dear Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

WM (WM.com) is North America's leading provider of comprehensive environmental solutions. Previously known as Waste Management and based in Houston, Texas, WM is driven by commitments to put people first and achieve success with integrity. The company, through its subsidiaries, provides collection, recycling, and disposal services to millions of residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout the U.S. and Canada. With innovative infrastructure and capabilities in recycling, organics, and renewable energy, WM provides environmental solutions to and collaborates with its customers in helping them achieve their sustainability goals. WM has the largest disposal network and collection fleet in North America, is the largest recycler of post-consumer materials, and is the leader in beneficial use of landfill gas, with a growing network of renewable natural gas plants and the most landfill gas-to-electricity plants in North America. WM's fleet includes approximately 11,000 natural gas trucks – the largest heavy-duty natural gas truck fleet of its kind in North America.

In Maine, we own and operate the Crossroads Landfill in Norridgewock and two hauling sites that run out of Norridgewock and Portland. This gives us a valuable perspective on the practical realities of managing solid waste and complying with laws and regulatory requirements in the State.

WM believes product stewardship programs are best suited for waste that is difficult to manage, may be hazardous if not managed properly, and does not currently have a collection system in place to safely dispose of or recycle those materials. Paint, carpet, mattresses, electronics, and lithium-ion batteries are just some of the items that states could consider in establishing stewardship programs. Lithium-ion batteries are especially problematic when not disposed of properly. **LD 474** would establish a product stewardship program for these batteries that currently have no organized collection system in place.

Lithium-ion batteries are a type of rechargeable battery that can be bought individually or are used in many products such as electronics, toys, wireless headphones, handheld power tools, small and large appliances, electric vehicles, and electrical energy storage systems.

When disposed of improperly, these batteries can be very problematic for waste transfer stations and recycling facilities. In fact, EPA determined that most lithium-ion batteries on the market are likely to be hazardous waste when they are disposed of because they may catch fire or explode if not managed carefully. Fires are now extremely common in our waste transfer and recycling facilities. Our industry



trade association, the National Waste and Recycling Association, released a report 2023 that estimated that more than 5,000 fires occur annually at recycling facilities alone.

To that point, several of our facilities in New England have been impacted by the improper disposal of lithium-ion batteries that resulted in serious fires. In 2023, we experienced a fire at our Rochester, NH recycling facility, one that almost destroyed the entire building, and two fires at our Auburn, NH transfer station. Before that, a fire at the Laconia, NH transfer station resulted in its closure for an extended period of time and costly repairs. In Massachusetts in 2024, a battery fire at our Avon recycling facility shut the site down for months, resulting in several million dollars in repairs and lost revenue. These are just a few examples of the fires we have experienced across our operations in New England, but this is a problem that is impacting sites across the country. These fires can be extremely dangerous to our employees, first responders, and result in tremendous costs, not just for the company, but for our host communities as well.

WM respectfully requests that the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources give LD 474 a favorable recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garrett Trierweiler', written in a cursive style.

Garrett Trierweiler
Director, Public Affairs