

## **Environment and Natural Resources Committee**

### **Testimony by Michael Carroll, Executive Director, Municipal Review Committee**

#### **In Opposition to LD 39, LD 108, and LD 244**

**Feb 22, 2021**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Michael Carroll, the Executive Director of the Municipal Review Committee.

Founded in 1991, the MRC is a nonprofit association of Maine communities led by an elected, volunteer board of directors. The MRC's mission is to ensure the affordable, environmentally sound disposal of municipal solid waste ("MSW") over the long term on behalf of its member communities.

In furtherance of this mission, the MRC represents 84 Maine municipalities and regional entities, representing a total of 115 Maine municipalities that are actively working with a potential buyer to open the Coastal Resources of Maine Plant in Hampden so that over 100,000 tons of MSW will be processed and recycled. The facility provides an opportunity for all generators of MSW within eastern and central Maine communities to divert MSW away from conventional landfill disposal and toward recovery of materials and products, consistent with the State's solid waste management hierarchy. It is the next generation beyond traditional source separated recycling facilities.

Located on MRC land, the facility is a sophisticated high-tech recycling, processing, and manufacturing facility that uses mixed MSW as its feedstock to produce a range of products and materials, with the largest anaerobic digester of its kind in the State. The facility has the capacity to process over 150,000 tons of in-state MSW and single stream recycling into value-added products for the fuel and recovery market in Maine. Indeed, the facility is very different both in its technology and in its business model from incineration facilities that produce a single energy product, electricity, while reducing the volume of waste needing land disposal. We envision multiple opportunities over time for adding more advanced equipment to produce new products, improve diversion rates, and reduce residuals generation.

Further, the MRC expects that the facility will allow member communities to raise their recycling rates and will offer the best chance for our members to meet and exceed the State's recycling goals. We anticipate that the Hampden facility, when fully operational, will divert up to 70% of the incoming MSW from landfill disposal through recovery of recycled materials or products or conversion to biogas, biomass fuels, or other saleable products.

As such we support additional efforts to reduce the amount of waste generated in Maine. Reduction is the first rung on the EPA and Maine's Solid Waste Hierarchy. The existing law honors that hierarchy by seeking to

eliminate a problematic material from the waste stream and reinforce the use of reusable bags – staying true to the EPA's and Maine's solid waste hierarchy – repealing it would go against the hierarchy.

The MRC is working hard toward reopening the plant so that it will be fully operational for our members. When operating the technology at the Hampden facility can recover and repurpose plastic bags, their presence costs money, adds maintenance time, and contributes to vector issues at landfills. Of note, at the Hampden facility, the issue of bag in bag is of note. Because the technology recovers recyclable material from household trash, the less bags that must be opened to retrieve the material the better for recovery rates.

Finally, several MRC communities passed bag bans long before the legislature acted to put a uniform law into place. The MRC supports local control but sees the overall benefit of standardization when it comes to waste management issues of this nature.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and your consideration as you move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Carroll". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Michael Carroll  
MRC Executive Director