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Testimony of BalloonsBlow.org

In Support of LD 618

An Act Regarding the Outdoor Release or Abandonment of Balloons

Before the Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

March 29, 2021

Greetings friends,

My name is Danielle Vosburgh, I am Co-Founder and Director of BalloonsBlow.org. I am testifying in support of LD 618.

My sister and I created BalloonsBlow.org because we experienced first hand the explosion of balloon pollution. Cleaning the beaches for the last 25 years, we have removed tons of plastic marine pollution.. and thousands of balloons. We were driven to help educate others and actively halt planned balloon releases. We need these measures - not for the child who accidentally lets go of a balloon, but to help deter adults who intentional release, or plan the release of this hazardous litter. Over the past 10 years, we have halted hundreds of planned balloon releases. Naming balloons in the littering law will no doubt help when explaining to potential offenders that releasing balloons is littering.

With LD 618 and LD 1023 Maine would be the first state to make a real difference in balloon pollution. Other states will follow leading to real reduction in balloon pollution. We have always agreed balloons should simply be included in existing littering laws. Without this specific designation on litter lists it seems as if it is acceptable. It is not acceptable to toss or abandon a paper wrapper, so it only makes sense when it comes to balloons. There is no difference from releasing a balloon into the air or tossing one on the ground.. either way, they both become litter - a blight to the landscape and death traps to animals. Balloons are an especially deadly form of litter as birds, marine life, domestic, and farm animals are attracted to this trash.

We have found balloon trash all over Maine from the Highlands to Acadia National Park, and all along the entire eastern seaboard. We have also witnessed an uptick in organized mass balloon releases here in Maine.. or as we call them 'mass littering events'. Littering is unlawful. Releasing balloons is nothing less than littering. It is fact - balloons generate garbage, squander finite Helium, easily trash faraway pristine places, cause power outages, spark fires, & kill countless animals.. including humans. Although these ordinances won't entirely rid Maine of this deadly blight - as Maine catches the brunt of balloon trash released from other states - it will set an example for other states to follow. We implore the state of Maine to enact common sense balloon legislation to greatly reduce the number of these flyaway death traps trashing Maine, and to start a well needed trend across the country.

Thank you, Representative Blume, for presenting this bill to the committee. To protect the flora and fauna of Maine, and beyond - we strongly support this bill and urge you to vote 'ought to pass'. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony, and please don't hesitate to reach out if I can be of any assistance.

Respectfully,
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