



Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Testimony of Shelby Wright, Eastern Region Manager of Engagement, Casella

April 26, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Shelby Wright and I am the Eastern Region Manager of Engagement for Casella.

Thank you for the opportunity to address LD 1208 “An Act To Amend the State’s Electronic Waste Recycling Law”

At Casella, our mission is to protect the environment, strengthen our local communities, and grow our business by creating value from society’s waste streams. As the handler of almost 2/3 of Maine’s waste, our ability to grow and enhance our commitment to Maine’s residents and businesses hinges closely on the regulatory processes within the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

As such, Casella recognizes that regulatory oversight is a complex and complicated process and one that needs regular review. This bill however seems to be a solution looking to fix a problem that doesn’t exist.

Maine’s E-Waste recycling program was established in 2004 by an act of the Legislature to specify product stewardship responsibilities for end-of-life management for electronics, such as televisions, monitors, laptops, tablets, e-readers, portable DVD players, and all-in-one computers, etc.

From January 2006 through December 2020, Maine residents recycled approximately 103 million pounds of electronics with the financial support of electronics manufacturers.

To the extent the manufactures are funding this program, perhaps they could benefit from more transparency in order to see how their dollars are being spent and where efficiencies in financial distributions can be found. To that end, Casella is open to engaging with them and other legitimate stakeholders to work towards ways to improve program transparency.

That said, it would be unwise to make the wholesale changes to the current program as proposed by LD 1208. The risks to the current system of creating an EPR scheme more beneficial to the producers of this waste would result in taking the program backwards by putting more onus on the residents and businesses of Maine and potentially reducing Maine’s high rate of recycling of E-Waste by adding unnecessary layers to an already straight forward program.

In its current form, LD 1208:

- Seeks to undo Maine’s existing and well-established E-Waste collection infrastructure without providing for an alternative structure to handle materials,
- Sets up a system where the producers have sole control over pricing based on often unstable market fluctuations,
- Proposes to run the same program with lower costs, ignoring the logistical challenges of rural collection, transportation expense, and delivery to out of state processing facilities,
- Transfers the logistical and financial burden of material consolidation and storage to the Municipalities,

- Sets unreasonable limits on collection levels that most small communities will have difficulty reaching,
- Creates the potential for higher drop-off fees for residents, as municipalities will have to balance the financials of collection with storage and consolidation,
- Contradicts itself in many places creating a lack of clarity from the onset; and finally,
- Includes a loophole that undermines the entire program it seeks to create by allowing producers to meet their program requirements via out of program participation.

At the end of the day, Maine has one of the best E-Waste programs in the country. It may not be the cheapest, but we collect more because of the convenience of our existing program.

We urge an ought not to pass vote from the committee.

Thank you and I look forward to the work session.