

Heather Abbott
Yarmouth

10 May 2021

Testimony in SUPPORT of LD #1541,

An Act To Support and Improve Municipal Recycling Programs and Save Taxpayer Money

Greetings Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Heather Abbott and I am a resident of Yarmouth, Maine. I currently serve on the Yarmouth Town Council, and am the former Chairperson of Yarmouth's Committee for Energy Efficiency and Sustainability. I am testifying before you today as a mother and concerned citizen.

A student from Harrison Middle School emailed me and asked for me to testify on this bill because of its importance to our environment and economy. When kids are reaching out to adults for help, it is our duty to respond. This bill is an important way for us to show up for current and future generations.

As we all know, Maine communities are struggling with rising costs in our recycling programs due to wasteful packaging materials. As in all of Maine, Yarmouth struggles with items being recycled that shouldn't and items being placed in the wrong areas which contaminate the recycling process and increase costs involved. Some good news in Yarmouth is that we are finally in the process of implementing a Pay As You Throw program to help incentivize more efficient recycling.

However, LD 1541 will adopt a proven solution for all of Maine called Extended-Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging. This will further help Yarmouth to see that our recycling process and costs are streamlined. Most Mainers don't understand that all of us are paying for the disposal of irresponsible packaging through our taxes. Extended Producer Responsibility will help shift those costs to the big producers who sell us the packaging without affecting Maine's small businesses. As our Harrison Middle School student so perfectly stated, we have an opportunity here that "would help Maine's environment and economy at the same time."

Please join me and our environmentally aware youth by supporting this important bill. Please vote that LD 1542 ought to pass.

Thank you.

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