



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

My name is Corliss Davis. I live in Belfast and I am the Co-Chair of the Climate Change Issue Group for the Maine Unitarian-Universalist State Advocacy Network. MUUSAN represents the 25 UU congregations throughout Maine and we strongly endorse LD1541 as we also endorsed LD2104 last year.

However, LD1541 is stronger in noteworthy ways than last year's bill. The bipartisan sponsors have focused on the largest producers of packaging in Maine - 500 of which are already paying into Extended Producer Responsibility programs in Canada and other countries. 1541 also includes stronger exemptions for small producers and non-profits.

We already have successful product stewardship laws for things like paint, fluorescent bulbs, and bottles, so why not for packaging? EPR for Packaging laws like LD1541 create a more equitable system and incentivize producers to reduce the volume of their packaging and use more recyclable packaging. It would benefit us all if we used packaging made from paper from Maine's forest products industry rather than from the plastics that pollute our beautiful rivers and bays.

EPR systems also reimburse struggling towns for the taxpayer-funded costs of disposing of these materials. In Belfast, now that some COVID concerns have eased, our Transfer Station again accepts most "recyclable" materials. But the Station manager has told me that the recycling side of his operation costs our city money. He could profit slightly from certain of the #2 plastics we turn in if he had a second baler to prepare them for pickup, but finding markets for packaging is his biggest problem. LD1541 specifically incentivizes producers of packaging to use "readily recyclable" materials, defined as those with "a consistent market for purchase."

Twenty-three Maine municipalities have already adopted resolutions urging Maine to adopt an EPR for Packaging law. LD1541 is entitled "An Act To Support and Improve Municipal Recycling Programs and Save Taxpayer Money" for a reason: in Belfast, the annual reimbursements provided by this bill could be used for things like much-needed recycling education and for the purchase of equipment like balers.

One of our most central Unitarian-Universalist principles is "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Taking responsibility for the trash we produce in a fair and equitable manner would be an important way of recognizing our place in that web while also strengthening and increasing recycling throughout Maine.

On behalf of the Maine UU State Advocacy Network, I strongly urge an "ought to pass" vote on LD1541. Thank you.