

# GoGo Refill

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64 E Street • South Portland, ME 04106

May 10, 2021

To members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

We know that nearly 40% of our waste stream is made up of disposable packaging materials. These items are designed to be used for a short time and then discarded. And we know that many Maine towns have had to shutter their recycling facilities due to changes in the global recycling market. Combining these 2 issues has made a mountain of waste!

We are in the midst of a global plastic pollution crisis. Our reliance on single-use plastic and packaged goods has created a catastrophe for waste management facilities, recycling efforts across the world - and oceans & marine life as well. The weakening of recycling programs across Maine and the world has captured the attention of consumers & taxpayers who want to dispose of their waste properly, and have come to rely on their municipalities to offer recycling services. It is dismaying to watch recycling centers across Maine reduce the waste they will accept, or close their doors altogether, leaving their townspeople holding the bag - literally.

We know that Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a better way, and we know it works because there are examples of it all over the world. EPR for packaging is already underway in many countries, and even 6 provinces in Canada, meaning that many of the larger manufacturers are already participating in similar programs - just not here. And the research shows that these programs produce recycling rates double what we see here in Maine. There also proves to be no increase in the cost of the products for consumers.

As a Maine business focused on waste-reduction we hear first-hand from Maine residents who are frustrated by overly packaged products. Consumers are told to reduce their waste, but rarely are low and no waste options available to them on the shelves. At GoGo Refill, we're changing that because we believe low-waste options should be available to all. Because we want to be part of the solution, we helped Maine consumers prevent the need of almost 20,000 disposable plastic packages, in our first year alone! It is clear from our experience that businesses have a huge role to play in solving the plastic pollution and recycling crises facing our communities.

That is why we support Recycling Reform. We need to raise the bar so that more businesses, the big out of state corporations in particular, do their part like we are. Recycling Reform raises the standards on packaging so that big corporations have an incentive to be part of the solution. Maine's residents and small business owners don't want to be the only ones working to solve this problem, and we need Recycling Reform to level the playing field, and make waste management more fair.

It's time to make recycling work for the taxpayers, not for corporations.

Laura Marston

Owner, GoGo Refill