

Alison McKellar
Camden, Maine and Mid-Coast Solid Waste Corporation

Good morning-

I am writing in support of LD1541

I serve as the Treasurer of the Board of Directors of Mid-Coast Solid Waste Corporation, a four town transfer station located in Rockport. I also serve as Vice-Chair of the Camden Select Board and have spent many years following the ups and downs of the recycling market and the complexities involved with public education around packaging and the relative environmental impacts of different materials. There are widespread misconceptions about which types of material are easily marketable and much of this misinformation is the direct result of campaigns on the part of companies to appeal to customers by making various claims about the eco-friendliness of their packaging or product. Many things may be technically recyclable but not readily recyclable, and this is hard for people to accept. Mixed paper is one such example of a product that has become very difficult to recycle given the collapse of the market. While corrugated cardboard is highly recyclable, mixed paper is becoming very costly. #3-7 plastic is another example of a material we are seeing more and more of, but the cost of recycling it is not supported by the revenue generated. Taxpayers are having to heavily subsidize the cost of collection, recycling, and transport for companies that choose packaging for which there is no market. On the other hand, companies that rely mostly on #1 and #2 plastic and corrugated cardboard are contributing to a mostly sustainable system that requires only minimal taxpayer subsidies. This is however subject to change and we need a way of incentivizing companies to work with recyclers to create package that has a plan for its entire life cycle.