

May 13, 2021

Testimony of Edward A. Barrett, Retired Lewiston City Administrator
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Testimony on LD 1639: "An Act To Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine
Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste"

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Ed Barrett and I am the recently retired City Administrator in Lewiston.

As proposed, LD 1639 would negatively impact the ability of the ReSource Waste Services facility in Lewiston to continue to operate as a major solid waste facility for the disposal of construction debris and oversized bulky waste in the Lewiston Auburn Area. This would have significant financial effects on the City of Lewiston and the residents of Lewiston and a number of area communities, all of which would see significantly higher costs associated with transporting such materials to one of the state's two major landfills.

ReSource Waste Services has up to 40 full-time employees at its facility in Lewiston and contributes and estimated \$14 million to the regional economy. The facility accepts C&D material and OBW from local businesses and the general public. It benefits Lewiston through lease and tax payments and offering free disposal of C&D and OBW to the City. The direct benefit to the City is about \$275,000 annually, not accounting for the facility's indirect support through employment and charitable giving. As one simple example, since 2010, the City has demolished over 70 dangerous and abandoned structures at a cost of over \$2 million. Without ReSource Waste Services accepting this demo debris at no cost, we may not have been able to remove these hazards from our community or our taxpayers would have faced either significantly higher costs.

Since the Lewiston facility came under current ownership, the City has had a close working relationship with the facility and has seen continuing improvements and upgrades to its operations, including specific efforts to increase their recycling and beneficial reuse rates.

Just last year, the Legislature considered and adopted LD 401 after considerable input from and the work of various stakeholders including state administration and regulators, the City of Lewiston, members of this Committee, and other stakeholders. That legislation redefined waste generated within the state and now requires processing facilities to meet specific recovery goals over the next several years. Once that legislation was enacted, we believed the necessary stable regulatory environment was in place to allow ReSource Waste to continue to operate and make its planned improvements. LD 1639 would overturn that effort.

We urge your opposition to LD 1639 because of the negative effects it will have on:

- The direct taxes and lease payments received by the City of Lewiston;
- Employment at the facility;
- Increased costs to municipalities, businesses, and individuals for disposal of construction debris and oversized bulky waste;

In addition, I would urge you all to give careful consideration to the potential long-term negative impacts of reversing the agreements reached last year and codified in LD 401. Maine struggles under the perception held by many that it is not a friendly state in which to do business. A rapid reversal of the agreements outlined in LD 401, agreements on which ReSource Waste has made financial commitments, will only add further to this perception.

We urge the Committee to carefully consider the impact I have outlined and vote 'Ought Not to Pass' on LD 1639.

Thank you for your consideration.