

Economic & Community Development

May 17, 2021

Testimony of Lincoln Jeffers, Economic and Community Development Director

Before the Joint Standing Committee of Environment and Natural Resources

Regarding 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 Lincoln Jeffers and I am Director of Economic and Community Development Director for the City of Lewiston. I submit this testimony urging you to vote “Ought Not to Pass” on LD 1639.

ReSource Waste Services is a Lewiston Business that processes and separates construction and demolition debris recycling the material processed into products of value. They have approximately 40 direct employees, dozens of people employed in support positions such as trucking, more than 50 customers, and more than 100 vendors. They spend \$14 million regionally. They are a significant regional employer and provide a needed service. They annually pay the City of Lewiston \$275,000 in tax and lease payments, and process up to 190 tons of demolition waste for the City of Lewiston at no cost as the City works to remove derelict buildings and unsafe housing to make way for new investment.

Beginning in 2019, ReSource Lewiston was part of a broad group of stakeholders that worked in partnership with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MEDEP) and legislators to update definitions included in the State’s solid waste management laws. As a result, LD 401, “An Act to Preserve State Landfill Capacity and Promote Recycling,” was passed by the Legislature and signed into law in March of 2020. To meet the recycling goals outlined in the legislation, ReSource moved forward with plans and MEDEP permitting to invest \$1.5 million upgrading their operations and installing a new equipment and processing line that will increase their recycling/beneficial use rate from approximately 60% to 72%.

As proposed LD 1639 puts that investment in jeopardy. The proposed recycling standards are uneconomical, unsustainable, and will likely force ReSource out of business. After several years of working in good faith with the State of Maine and other stakeholders to improve their operations, and taking action on the path to implement those improvements, the proposed legislation changes the rules in the middle of the game. I have worked in economic development for more than 20 years. To attract investment, tax base and jobs it is important to have clear standards and be predictable and consistent in their application. LD 1639 is none of these things.

For the reasons outlined above I encourage the Committee to vote “Ought Not to Pass” on this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.