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**Testimony of Kevin Roche, CEO/General Manager of ecomaine
before the Environment & Natural Resources Committee in Support of
LD 259, An Act to Improve Solid Waste Management & its proposed Amendment,
An Act to Increase Waste Handling Fees Imposed on the Landfilling of Municipal
Solid Waste and Construction and Demolition Debris
March 7, 2022**

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation... legislation that will make a difference in how fast we fill up Maine landfills with trash. BIGGER is not better when it comes to landfills, particularly when it comes to Maine landfills. We need to incentivize waste management strategies that are less filling and focus on the higher rungs of the waste hierarchy such as recycling. This legislation before you today will make a difference.

My name is Kevin Roche, and I am the General Manager of ecomaine. We are a quasi-municipal organization with more than 70 member communities serving Southern and Central Maine Communities. As a community owned organization, we operate Maine's largest municipal recycling facility, a food waste recovery program, a waste-to-energy plant, and a landfill. Our mission statement describes us best:

ecomaine provides comprehensive long-term solid waste solutions in a safe, environmentally responsible, economically sound manner, and is a leader in raising public awareness of sustainable waste management strategies.

Through our mission, ecomaine closely aligns its policies and practices with the solid waste management hierarchy that is clearly defined in State Statute. The Environmental Protection Agency also provides this same guidance for managing solid waste. This gives all of us a sound plan on how to best manage waste materials. However, for it to work in practice, we need Leadership and Execution in order to achieve positive results that are again, "less filling". Without Leadership and Execution, the practice of landfilling trash will remain the dominant pathway for most of our waste. It's the cheapest alternative, primarily because the true cost of dealing with all this waste being stored in our landfills will be with us for hundreds of years. Until that fact changes, Maine risks seeing the size of its landfills increase exponentially with every passing year.

This is not to say that we do not need landfills – it is important to reiterate that ecomaine operates a landfill, and we would be subject to the same increased fees proposed by LD 259. But to strengthen strategies in reduction, reuse, recycling, and compost/digestion throughout Maine, this is a worthwhile road to take.

I am grateful to have spoken with many of you in previous sessions about this important issue – we have made some progress in the recent past. However, we need to continue to show leadership that will turn theory into practice, when it comes to solid waste management in Maine.

I would also note that it's not just Maine waste that we are talking about. The Southern New England States are much further along with their landfilling crisis. Much of their waste is being shipped to Ohio, New Hampshire, and nothing stops it from coming into Maine. However the legislation before you will certainly discourage out of state waste from filling up Maine landfills.

LD 259 will make a difference and it's been successful in many other states. By deterring landfilling through increased financial fees, Maine will increase revenues available to Maine's cities and towns to make available for:

- **Reduction strategies for Randolph**
- **Reuse for Rumford**
- **Recycling in Rockland**
- **Waste Reduction in Wallagrass**
- **Compost in Casco**
- **Digestion in Danforth**
- **Biofuels for Bangor**
- **Less waste in Lebanon**

...And more strategies that will work in every corner of Maine, and which might otherwise be unachievable without the revenue made possible by LD 259.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on how to slow down the amount of trash we are landfilling in our State. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.