

Testimony IN SUPPORT
LD 1009 As Amended
An Act Regarding the Reduction and Recycling of Food Waste
Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Public Hearing
March 22, 2023

Senator Brenner, Chair; Representative Gramlich, Chair; and Honorable Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN SUPPORT of LD 1009 As Amended**. DWME (Don't Waste ME) is a citizens' group working for waste policy that gives communities local control, incorporates Zero Waste goals, and protects the health and environment of communities most impacted by waste facilities. LD 1009 provides an important framework to help Maine approach waste management from the front end to better achieve the goals of the State solid waste hierarchy. The [recent](#) January 2023 Maine Solid Waste Generation and Disposal Capacity Report for Calendar years 2020 and 2021 records that the State is behind on its goals for reduction, diversion and recycling of waste going to incineration and landfill. LD 1009 would focus on a portion of the waste stream representing opportunities to significantly reduce the amount of waste requiring disposal. Waste is a verb and something we choose to do. We can make better choices. LD 1009 represents better choices that preserve and repurpose valuable resources and conserve finite disposal capacity.

Importantly, this legislation gradually, with a time span starting in 2025 and concluding in 2035, diverts and then bans valuable food resources from disposal at incinerators and landfills. It begins by addressing the wasted food resources produced by large generators and progresses to capturing those resources from everyone. This phased-in approach provides opportunity for the important and necessary development of the infrastructure for collection, hauling, and processing. It allows time for education on the value of reducing the amount of food resources wasted and creating the structure to distribute edible food to food rescue organizations and individuals. Food resources not suitable for human consumption will be diverted for use by

farmers for livestock feed or directed to organic recycling facilities for composting or anaerobic digestion.

An important aspect of this bill that strengthens the critical front-end approach to managing the waste stream is the strong source separation components at the point of where the wasted resources are generated. Food resource generators are required to separate food from all inorganic waste such as packaging before sending the food resources to a composting or anaerobic digesting service. DEP (Department of Environmental Services) will be instrumental to providing educational resources to strengthen programs. These steps help assure that compost and digestate are clean and uncontaminated with packaging materials and suitable for use to remediate Maine's agricultural lands. This methodology reduces risks to human health and the environment. To address and balance concerns about contamination and the impact of significantly packaged food resources and the challenges attendant to on-site source separation, this legislation has allowances for large volumes of such organics to be separated and depackaged by mechanical means before recycling.

LD 1009 is an important essential beginning to the work that must be done to provide protection and sustainability for public health, our valuable resources, the environment, and Maine's future. We have only to look at Vermont, which has had a law to separate out food resources from MSW (municipal solid waste) since 2020 to know that implementation of LD 1009 is practical and achievable. Thank you for considering our comments. Our organization, DWME, asks that the Committee vote **OUGHT TO PASS** on LD 1009.

DWME
Jackie Elliott, Member
148 West Road
Waterboro, ME 04087
(207) 247-0103
j.c.elliott@roadrunner.com