



1284 Main St,
Washburn, ME 04786

May 3, 2023

Chair, Senator Brenner
Chair, Representative Gramlich
Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

OPPOSING LD 1418 An Act Concerning Single-use Disposable Water Bottles and Water Refill Stations

I am the owner of Country Farms Market in Washburn, ME.

We respect the laudable intent of the bill to reduce bottled water packaging waste, however, Maine has a strong proven history of recycling with a successful bottle redemption program.

Small independent stores serve as the backbones of our communities. Offering free, refillable water stations directly cuts into our viability and margins. Local, independent grocery stores, like mine, operate at a 1-2% bottom-line profit and efforts that further deteriorate our margins are concerning. Bottled water is the healthiest beverage option with a strong margin, in fact, the highest margin is in the smaller quantity bottles packaged for convenience (35-40%), the exact products that the refill stations would compete against.

Bottled water sales help offset the high cost of doing business here in Maine. Maine is a challenging state to do business — for example, the Labor and Housing Committee recently voted with a majority in favor of a bill seeking to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour next year (on top of the \$1+ annual increase we've already been experiencing), electricity rates have increased more than 30%, plus increased costs for employee benefits and health insurance, on top of the looming anticipated Paid Family Medical Leave program (which is rumored to cost \$400 million annually).

I urge you to stop adding additional pressures, requirements, and costs to run a business here in Maine. Let's leave it up to the businesses if they'd like to offer an alternative water option to their customers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mark Kelley, Owner
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