

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Senator Stacy Brenner, Senate Chair  
Representative Lori Gramlich, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**RE: MSCC Testimony in OPPOSITION to L.D. 1418: An Act Concerning Single-use Disposable Water Bottles and Water Refill Stations**

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Ben Lucas, I live in Portland, and I represent the Maine State Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is the voice of Maine business, speaking for approximately 5,000 Maine businesses of all sizes throughout the State. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to L.D. 1418. L.D. 1418 would effectively ban single-use water bottles from use at any event funded by or related to state action and would incentivize retailers to stop selling single-use water bottles by requiring anyone who does sell them to also provide a free drinking water refill station. We have several concerns over the proposed legislation.

First, this will be an enormous cost for stores across Maine to comply with. It appears that getting one of these water re-fill stations appears to be over \$1,000 dollars just for the unit. You will then have additional costs for the installation, plumbing, and water usage – which will be significant. This will result in a lot of stores taking bottled water off their shelves - perversely encouraging the purchase of less healthy beverage options. Additional cost increases like this will have a damaging impact on the business community and we should not be passing legislation that continues to drive up costs on Maine businesses.

Second, there will be several administrative burdens to comply with this. From the cleaning and sanitary efforts – to the burden of having the post signs around the store. Workers are incredibly busy and already have a lot of responsibilities to provide a service to a customer. And given the workforce shortage we already are challenged with in Maine, we should not be passing legislation that will make it even more difficult to retain workers and add more of a demand to them. Additionally, if a store decides not to install one, and no longer sells bottled water – that means encouraging the sale of more potentially unhealthy drinks.

For these reasons, we would respectfully ask the committee to vote, “ought not to pass” on L.D. 1418. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am more than happy to answer any questions and bring back additional information for the work session if needed.

Sincerely,  
Benjamin R. Lucas  
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Maine State Chamber of Commerce  
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