



Testimony of Sarah Woodbury, Vice President of Programs and Policy, Defend Our Health
In Support of LD 2134 “An Act Regarding Responsibility for Activities Intended to Increase the
Use of Refillable and Reusable Beverage Containers.”
Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee
January 24, 2024

Hello Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Sarah Woodbury. I am the Vice President for Programs and Policy at Defend Our Health. Defend Our Health’s mission is to make sure that everyone has equal access to safe food and drinking water, healthy homes, and products that are toxic-free and climate friendly. Please accept this testimony in support of LD 2134 “An Act Regarding Responsibility for Activities Intended to Increase the Use of Refillable and Reusable Beverage Containers.”

Last session the legislature passed LD 1909, “An Act to Modernize Maine’s Bottle Redemption Law”. LD 1909 modernized Maine’s bottle bill, a program that has been in place since 1976 and is one of the most successful litter reduction programs in the state’s history. LD 2134 makes a small administrative change to that law. It moves the funding and administration of the refillable and reuse program to a commingling cooperative. It doesn’t change any of the requirements of the program. The cooperative still needs to do a feasibility study to make sure they can meet the goals of program. They still need to fund activities to develop and implement models for refillable beverage container washing techniques, research container options, and conduct outreach to stakeholders regarding the benefits of reuse.

The bottle bill and the work done to modernize it is incredibly important to help reduce plastic waste and meet our climate goals. This minor tweak will help the program run much more smoothly while allowing the DEP to maintain ultimate control over the program. Defend urges the committee to vote “ought to pass” on LD 2134.

Thank you!