



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Sally Cluchey in support of

LD 1908, An Act to Require the Cooperation of Original Manufacturers of Electronic Devices to Facilitate the Repair of Those Devices by Device Owners and Independent Repair Providers

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Sally Cluchey, and I represent House District 52, which includes Bowdoinham, Richmond, and part of Bowdoin. I am here today as a proud cosponsor of **LD 1908, An Act to Require the Cooperation of Original Manufacturers of Electronic Devices to Facilitate the Repair of Those Devices by Device Owners and Independent Repair Providers**.

When our electronics break, we often face barriers to repairing them, which can result in shelling out hundreds of dollars for a fix or being forced to buy a replacement. Unfortunately, many phones and laptops currently on the market are difficult to fix by design. Manufacturers often use glue instead of screws, don't provide repair instructions or refuse to sell spare parts. These intentional difficulties drive up the cost of repairs and produce mountains of electronic waste.

I'd like to share a recent personal example that illustrates this problem clearly. In September, I bought my first-ever Apple Watch. Less than a month later, I accidentally knocked my arm into a door frame and cracked the glass. I did what we encourage consumers to do and I tried to repair it. I went to two different independent repair shops and contacted Apple support directly. In every case, I was told the same thing: the cost to repair the glass was more than what I had paid for the watch in the first place.

I submitted a claim to my insurance, which refunded the cost of the watch. That left me with a frustrating choice: pay more to repair a one-month-old device, or buy a brand-new watch of the exact same model. I tried hard to find another option, but in the end, I purchased a new one. That decision felt wrong, but the system made repair impractical and uneconomical. A minor accident turned into unnecessary waste, not by necessity, but by design.

This legislation requires electronics manufacturers selling products in Maine after July 1, 2021, to provide independent repair shops and device owners with the documentation, parts and tools necessary for diagnosis, maintenance and repair. Additionally, it prohibits manufacturers from intentionally reducing device functionality.

Electronic waste is now the fastest-growing part of the domestic municipal waste stream.¹ For years, manufacturers have been pushing us towards a cycle of consumption and waste. Devices are designed to be replaced rather than repaired, which is disastrous for our environment. According to the International Telecommunication Union, only 17% of e-waste is appropriately recycled, which means the vast majority of the world's annual 61.3 million tonnes of e-waste enters our waste stream, with serious environmental ramifications.²

Recent surveys show, 80% of respondents said they would buy a new computer from manufacturers that explicitly support the right to repair, and 42% expressed concern about the environmental impact of e-waste. Additionally, promising research from the U.S. Public Interest Research Group found that families could save \$382 per year if we could repair, instead of replace, our technology.³

In 2023, New York became the first state requiring electronic device manufacturers to make repair materials publicly available. Eighty-four percent of Maine voters approved the November 2023 ballot referendum on automobile right to repair, demonstrating strong support for consumer repair rights.⁴

By giving consumers a real ability to repair their electronics and promoting a culture of sustainability, we are not only enhancing consumer rights, but also contributing to a greener, more resilient future.

I urge the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/sciencematters/helping-communities-manage-electronic-waste>

²

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Environment/Documents/Toolbox/GEM_2020_def.pdf

³

<https://pirg.org/edfund/media-center/report-fixing-instead-of-replacing-devices-could-save-americans-nearly-50-billion-a-year/#:~:t ext=BOSTON%20%20%94%20Americans%27%20dependence%20on%20rapidly.per%20year%20by%20repairing%20its>

⁴ <https://pirg.org/campaigns/right-to-repair/>