

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and esteemed members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Carey Donovan and I live in town of Tremont on Mount Desert Island. Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to speak in favor of LD 1541.

For five years I have been involved in a volunteer Zero Waste Group on Mount Desert Island for which I now serve as Coordinator. Our Zero Waste group is affiliated with A Climate to Thrive, a local organization that focuses on sustainability and climate change. We consider the amount of waste we produce in this country to be a sustainability issue. We work on ways to reduce waste and to better educate the public about waste issues.

I have become familiar with the Maine State Waste Hierarchy with Reduce at the top Landfill at the bottom. There is no question at all, none, that by far the best strategy for managing waste is to **not have so much of in the first place.**

But this brings a dilemma. Our municipalities are responsible for managing waste and absorbing the costs of this, which typically represent about 5% of a town's budget, but they have virtually no control over how much waste becomes theirs to manage.

LD 1541 presents a **rare opportunity, a very rare opportunity**, to reduce waste in Maine in a meaningful way. Already there is concern about Maine running out of landfill space in the next 20 years. According to the Maine DEP, packaging materials make up about 30% of Maine's municipal solid waste. LD 1541 would put some of the responsibility for these materials back on the producers, rather than having it be all on those who are on the receiving end. When put in place, LD 1541 will incentivize producers to:

- 1) Redesign packaging and reduce packaging material;
- 2) Create packaging that is made of materials that can be readily recycled and for which there is a consistent market; **recycling doesn't work if no one wants your material;**
- 3) And it will incentivize companies to eliminate toxic chemicals from packaging.

This bill is good for our health, good for the environment, good for the towns, and good for the state.

There has been a lot said about recycling today. Recycling is a good thing, but there are things that are **better** than recycling: things like **re-use, refill, reduce**. I would be much more excited about taking my laundry bottle to be refilled with new product, than taking it to be recycled. LD 1541 can help us with all of these. Thank you for your consideration and I hope you will enthusiastically support LD 1541.