



Maine Chapter

565 Congress St. Ste. 206B, Portland, ME 04101

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www.sierraclub.org/maine

TO: The Joint Standing Committee on Environment And Natural Resources

FROM: Olin Jenner, Executive Committee, Sierra Club Maine

RE: LD 102 An Act To Improve the Manufacturing of Plastic Bottles and Bottle Caps

Senator Carson, Representative Tucker, members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee my name is Olin Jenner and I am presenting testimony on behalf of Sierra Club Maine and our 18,000 members and supporters in favor of LD 102: An Act To Improve the Manufacturing of Plastic Bottles and Bottle Caps. The Sierra Club believes that unless action is taken at the state level plastic pollution will continue to balloon into a crisis.

LD 102 takes a simple approach to reducing the amount of plastic in our environment: Force manufactures to use recycled plastic. The short-term impact of this legislation would be to create a stable market for recycled plastics, something that is desperately needed to incentivize recycling. Fortunately for the manufactures there is no shortage of plastic in our collective waste stream. It is estimated that 91% of plastic that is used in the US finds its way to a landfill or the ocean. Creating a market for this plastic would encourage local transfer stations to prioritize the separation of plastics from their waste stream.

Currently, there is no mandate or incentive to use recycled plastic which means that manufactures are not encouraged to use recycled plastic. According to Rick LeBlanc writing for Sustainable Businesses, Coca-Cola sources only 7% of its plastic from recycled material and Nestle sources only 6%. This bill would effectively double the required amount of recycled plastic found in both bottles in Maine.

Of course, recycling incentives are not the end all solution to the plastics problem. Real action must be taken to deal with upstream sources to limit pollution and protect our oceans. However, this bill is a good first step in dealing with the problems of plastic pollution. While the most effective solution to the plastics problem is to eliminate the material at the source, that is not a feasible policy to pursue. Instead a combination of recycling mandates, public pressure to eliminate needless plastic, and clear and effective public policy that protects our environment and encourages research and use of alternative materials appears to be the best path forward. This bill, while small in scale and targeted in nature is smart policy that will change the industry incrementally.

Therefore, I urge the committee to vote “ought to pass.”



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Thank you for your time,

Olin Jenner