



Reduce Food Waste

Support: LD 1534

An Act to Reduce Food Waste in Maine

Sponsored by: Rep. Craig Hickman

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Maine's Food Recovery Hierarchy is a great framework, but our policies do not help us meet it.

- Forty percent of our food supply is wasted every year. This has significant economic, environmental, and social costs. Maine is now the most food-insecure state in New England, yet more than a quarter of our municipal solid waste is food. Two-thirds of that is still perfectly edible.
- The University of Maine's George J. Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions conducted a thorough stakeholder process in 2017 to determine what Maine should do to combat the tragic and growing problem of food waste. Diverse stakeholders including municipal officials, farmers, grocers, restaurateurs, environmental organizations, waste management professionals, food recovery and nonprofit hunger relief organizations, composters, and educators produced a report: "Waste Is Not The Maine Way." There was near-unanimous agreement that the state should be doing more to help public schools reduce food waste and incentivize the donation of still-edible food to people before sending it to landfills.
- Maine cannot afford to ignore this problem. Food waste is expensive for taxpayers and our environment, and with so many hungry Mainers, it is morally indefensible. Waste is not the Maine way.

LD 1534 would:

- Provide centralized, clear, and consistent guidance to Maine schools, municipalities, and others trying to reduce food waste.
- Ensure that guidance is created in consultation with all state agencies, businesses, and non-governmental organizations with an expertise and interest in reducing food waste.