



**RESOLUTION 19-001
TO SUPPORT MUNICIPAL RECYCLING PROGRAMS (LD1431)**

WHEREAS, Maine's communities are struggling to maintain, expand, and in some cases are eliminating recycling programs due to rising costs and difficult-to-manage materials; and,

WHEREAS product packaging, which includes plastic, metal, glass, and cardboard, constitutes approximately 30-40% of the materials managed by weight in Maine's municipal waste management programs; and,

WHEREAS Maine taxpayers currently unfairly bear 100% of the cost and pay an estimated \$16 million to \$17 million each year to finance the management of this material through fragmented and increasingly expensive disposal or recycling options; and,

WHEREAS producers of product packaging have little incentive to minimize wasteful packaging or increase access to recycling; and there is no organized coordination between the producers of packaging and municipalities that are responsible for disposing of or recycling the packaging materials; and,

WHEREAS producers of product packaging have taken some or all responsibility for the management of post-consumer packaging in other parts of the world, including all European Union member states and five provinces in Canada, and, as a result, have greatly increased recycling rates, expanded infrastructure investment, created jobs, and reduced taxpayer costs.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, We, the Town of Whitefield, Maine, support an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging law as endorsed by the Legislature in 2019 through the passage of the Resolve, To Support Municipal Recycling Programs (LD 1431). We believe that this policy will work to make recycling in Maine:

More effective: Producers of packaging materials would have a direct economic incentive to produce less-wasteful packaging that can easily and profitably be managed by municipal recycling programs. Having shared responsibility between those who create the waste and those who manage the waste would foster recycling system improvements and enable greater participation in recycling across Maine; and,

More sustainable: An EPR law for packaging is an insurance policy for Maine municipalities when global recycling markets are unfavorable. The current approach to recycling is not resilient to fluctuations in the global recycling market. When commodity prices fall unexpectedly, towns and cities may be forced to stop or restrict their programs; and,

More equitable: Maine's cities, towns and taxpayers are currently footing the bill for a problem they didn't create. With recycling reform, taxpayers will no longer pay for the cost of recycling since the net costs of recycling would be reimbursed and the packaging manufacturers that produce less wasteful, more recyclable packaging would pay less than those who do not. This is a much more equitable way to distribute costs.


Signed and dated 19th day of November 2019 by the Select Board of Whitefield, Maine.


Lester Sheaffer, Chair



William McKeen, Vice Chair

Charlene Donahue


Lise Hanners


Keith Sanborn

TRUE AND ATTESTED


TOWN CLERK