



COUNCIL RESOLVE

Resolve, Calling Upon the Maine Legislature to Support an Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Law.

**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 estimate \$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 the municipalities that are responsible for disposing of or recycling the packaging materials; and

**Whereas,** producers of product packaging have taken some or all of the responsibility for managing 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,**

**The City Council of the City of Lewiston supports an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Packaging law as endorsed by the Legislature in 2019 through the passage of LD 1431, A Resolve To Support Municipal Recycling Programs. 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.

**Be It Further Resolved,** that

The City Clerk shall provide copies of this Resolve to the Members of the Legislature's Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and the Lewiston Legislative Delegation.