We, Maine’s municipalities, 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;

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 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.

Sincerely,

Vaughn Leach, Select Board Chair

Ellen Best

James Dow