



To: Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Retail Association of Maine, Natural Resources Council of Maine, and Maine Grocers and Food Producers Association.

Subject: Preserving Maine's Existing Law Regarding Single-use Plastic Bags

Date: February 2, 2021

This session the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee will consider four bills to repeal Maine's plastic bag reduction law, 38 MRSA §1611. So far, LD 39, LD 108, and LD 244 have been printed.

This law was enacted when the 129th Legislature adopted LD 1532, with leadership from the ENR Committee. Our organizations worked closely together in 2018 and 2019 to develop compromise language for LD 1532, and we strongly supported passage of the bill. We remain unified in our support of this policy and urge the Committee to reject these proposals and preserve our existing law.

Maine's plastic bag reduction policy was due to take effect on Earth Day, April 22, 2020, but the effective date was postponed until January 15, 2021, in LD 2167 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The law was subsequently delayed until July 1, 2021, to provide additional time for Maine's businesses to comply due to the ongoing pandemic.

Despite these challenges, we do not feel that Maine should change course on this policy. We believe the merits for passage of the law in the first place remain as strong as they did then, and we believe full implementation of the law should occur on the current modified schedule.

Thank you for your time and your support of this important law that addresses plastic pollution, saves taxpayer money, and creates a uniform statewide bag policy that provides consistency to Maine's businesses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curtis F. Picard".

Curtis Picard, CAE
President and CEO, Retail
Association of Maine

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah K. Nichols".

Sarah K. Nichols,
Sustainable Maine Director,
Natural Resources Council of
Maine

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Cummings".

Christine Cummings,
Executive Director, Maine
Grocers and Food Producers
Association