

## SAMPLE CUSTOMIZABLE LETTER

Dear [Store Manager/Owner],

My name is [NAME] and I frequently shop at your store. [INCLUDE SOMETHING PERSONAL YOU LIKE ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS]. I am reaching out today to urge your business to reduce the amount of single-use packaging currently provided to customers and make the transition to reusable and/or recyclable glass, metals, and paper wherever possible.

Many consumers today are concerned about the health effects of long-term exposure to plastics and the negative impacts that plastics have on the environment. Research has confirmed that the chemicals contained in plastics can transfer into consumable goods and long-term uses of plastic items can put humans at higher risks of cancers and other health conditions. This is a growing concern for young children who can be exposed to the chemical additives of plastics even before they are born. Additionally, plastics that enter the environment through deliberate and accidental littering can harm animals. Animals interacting with plastics can become entangled, confuse plastics for food sources, and even choke on the inorganic material. Plastics can cause severe harm to humans and animals alike.

The increased use of disposable packaging is also a major concern for the people here in Maine, where disposal options are limited, and landfills are running out of room to store our trash. It is estimated that Maine taxpayers spend up to \$17 million each year on the disposal of packaging alone, and those costs could grow if we continue to throw items away at the same rate. Offering reusable and recyclable packaging instead helps support a circular economy, creating safe jobs in these industries and allowing manufacturers to repurpose finite resources that would otherwise sit forever in landfills, and businesses who provide plastic and packaging-free alternatives for their products can market their services to a wider audience, increasing their customer base and their earning potential.

Here in Maine, The Natural Resources Council of Maine is an organization with many resources for businesses who wish to incorporate more sustainable practices into their daily operations. They have toolkits, resources, and expertise to help you get started. I would encourage you to contact their staff if you're unsure how to start. While it may not be possible to switch every type of packaging right away, taking steps to reduce packaging and waste in your store can have incredible benefits for Maine's people, the environment, and even your bottom line.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[PHONE NUMBER]

[EMAIL]

[ADDRESS]