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Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2024 5:09 PM
To: DEP Rule Comments
Subject: Stewardship Program for Packaging

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Maine Board of Environmental Protection,

Roughly one third of all municipal solid waste in Maine is packaging. The Department of Environmental Protection estimates communities across Maine are spending \$17.5 million each year on the expensive task of collecting and managing all this packaging waste through recycling or disposal programs.

But this doesn't make sense. These communities have no control over how companies design their products, how much packaging they use, and whether that packaging is recyclable or not. As a result, even though individuals and communities try their best to properly dispose of all this packaging waste, only a fraction of it is recycled. If properly implemented, Maine's first-in-the-nation Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Law can change this.

The rules the Department of Environmental Protection have proposed to implement, administer, and enforce this necessary new program will help fix Maine's broken and disjointed approach to managing packaging waste by creating a fairer and more sustainable approach that is funded by the companies that generate all this waste in the first place.

The proposed rules contain critical program goals which must be adopted. These include goals that incentivize regulated companies to:

- Cut single-use packaging in half by 2050.
- Ensure 30% of all packaging sold in Maine is reusable or refillable by 2050.
- Ensure all single-use packaging is 100% recyclable in Maine by 2050.

Failure to meet these goals will result in penalties and increased funding to reduce single-use packaging and increase reusable and refillable packaging systems.

Please support this necessary new program by approving the proposed rules. Doing so will save communities across Maine money, reduce packaging waste and single-use plastics, improve stagnant recycling rates, and spur investments into real Zero Waste systems.

Gary

California