

March 7, 2022

Hon. Senator Stacy Brenner, Senate Chair
Hon. Representative Ralph Tucker, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

RE: Proposed Amendment to L.D. 259: *An Act To Increase Waste Handling Fees Imposed on the Landfilling of Municipal Solid Waste and Construction and Demolition Debris*

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Ben Lucas, and I am submitting this letter on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, a statewide business organization consisting of a network of more than 5,000 large and small employers across Maine. Due to a scheduling conflict, I apologize for being unable to deliver our testimony in person, however, we believe it important to be on record in opposition to the proposed amendment to LD 259.

Construction and demolition debris (CDD) and solid waste is a statewide issue that has a long history in our state. The Maine Chamber weighs in on issues when they impact the business community as a whole and if LD 259 were to pass, it would impact all businesses in Maine. LD 259 proposes to increase the disposal fee at a landfill of municipal solid waste and municipal solid waste ash from \$1 per ton to \$5 per ton and to increase the fee imposed on the disposal at a landfill of construction and demolition debris and residue from the processing of construction and demolition debris from \$2 per ton to \$10 per ton. This increase in CDD will drive up the costs of doing business in Maine. The other increase costs on solid waste will be passed along to every single person living in Maine. The costs of doing business in Maine already is high and every little bit adds up, including increased disposal fees.

Solid waste and CDD is part of our culture, and we all want to deal with it in an economical and environmentally sensitive manner. Maine's landfills do a great job for Maine's businesses and citizens ensuring that we maximize our capacity in Maine. To have facilities available for Maine businesses into the future is not only important but necessary. The Maine Chamber has always advocated for more certainty in Maine's long term business climate and waste disposal of CDD and municipal solid waste is part of that equation.

We would also ask for some clarification about what the increase in disposal fees would go towards, something that currently not clearly stated in the amendment to LD 259. We think it is important that anytime the Legislature is considering a proposal to increase the costs of doing business in the State of Maine, it is clearly defined what that additional money may go towards.

We would respectfully ask the committee to vote, “Ought Not To Pass” on LD 259. Maine businesses are already dealing with several increased costs over the last couple of years, and we should not be passing legislation that drives the costs up even more. Any time a business must increase the costs of doing business, that hurts future investment into their company and their employees. It could also hurt future investment into job creation. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is strongly opposed to the proposed amendment to LD 259.

If the committee has any questions or needs additional information in advance of the work session, my contact information is below and please feel free to reach out. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Benjamin R. Lucas
Government Relations Specialist
Maine State Chamber of Commerce
Phone: 207-441-9333
Email: blucas@mainechamber.org