

Testimony in Opposition to 1639
An Act To Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste
On behalf of Mark Cayer, Mayor of Lewiston
May 17, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Mark Cayer and I am the Mayor of the City of Lewiston, here today in respectful opposition to LD 1639.

While well intended, LD 1639 would undermine the core principles of a bill LD 401, which was passed just one year ago, and result in the closure of key partner and good neighbor- the ReSource Lewiston facility.

LD 401, which became Public Law 619, was supported unanimously by this committee last session, and was the result of over a year of discussion and negotiations among the Department of Environmental Protection and numerous stakeholders. While not perfect for any one party, the new law aims to increase recycling rates at the ReSource Lewiston facility while at the same time protecting jobs and municipal interests.

ReSource Lewiston benefits the City of Lewiston by making lease and tax payments and offering free disposal of C&D and OBW to the City. The direct benefit to the City of these services and payments is roughly \$275,000 annually, not including the indirect support through employment and charitable giving.

As an example of this benefit, ReSource Lewiston has accepted the demo and debris of over 70 dangerous and abandoned buildings since 2010. Without this facility, Lewiston taxpayers would have encountered significant more costs, which already cost \$2 million, or would not have been able to remove these hazards from our community.

ReSource's commitment to the Lewiston facility supports the State's established solid waste goals and hierarchy, and has allowed us to increase recycling for certain wastes generated within the City.

Last year's bill resulted in ReSource committing to over \$1.5 million in investment in the Lewiston facility, which will help allow them to hit the new increased recycling targets now in law. As Mayor of the City of Lewiston, I ask this committee to allow that new law time to succeed, protect jobs and investment in our City, and protect the interests of many municipalities around Maine by voting ought not to pass on LD 1639.

It is imperative for the future of our solid waste system that public policy be predictable so that the public and private sectors can support strategies to reach our public solid waste goals. Thank you.