



Maine Municipal  
Association

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To: Municipal Officials

Fr: Rebecca Graham, Legislative Advocate, MMA

Re: **Call to participate**– Resolve to Support Maine Recycling Programs

Date: July 10, 2019

Maine Municipal Association has been informed of an effort by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to draft legislation creating an extended producer packaging responsibility law for the Legislature consideration next year. The goal of the resolve is to create a system that shifts responsibility for managing the waste they generate, rather than shifting those costs onto the property taxpayers. To this end, DEP is seeking input how best to achieve this goal.

Specifically, the resolve (2019 Resolve Chapter 42), *Resolve To Support Maine Recycling Programs*, seeks to create a system that addresses four key outcomes:

1. Covers at least 80% of the costs associated with recycling readily recyclable materials;
2. Reimburses municipalities for the cost of managing nonrecyclable packaging;
3. Invests in waste reduction and recycling education and infrastructure, and
4. Pays higher fees for packaging materials that are not readily recyclable, are made of multiple materials, or are toxic, while assessing lower fees for packaging materials with higher recycling values and recycled content.

As municipalities are mandated to manage waste they do not generate, MMA staff are hopeful that a source focused approach to packaging through this effort may mean lower costs for municipalities and provide a better way forward than other proposals like using increased tipping fees on communities who have few recycling markets close by to subsidize the waste streams in the more densely populated areas.

The Natural Resource Council of Maine has provided the following links to a similar program in Quebec as a potential model along with some information links to programs offered at a recycling conference which may be informative.

*Here is a link to a presentation done by the head of municipal services in April at our Recycling conference (the beginning is useful): <http://mrra.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/product-stewardship-M-Guillemette.pdf>*

*This is a link to Quebec's annual report with great information about the program that has 65% recycling rate and 3400 brand owners paying in:  
<https://www.eeq.ca/rapportannuel2018/en/index.php>*

*And finally, here is a really big section of how municipalities are reimbursed in Quebec through their legislation: <http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cr/Q-2,%20r.%2010>*

The department is seeking input from interested parties that have preferences for certain systems like those in the Quebec model above to achieve these goals. It is also important for them to understand the challenges for such programs in rural and distant municipalities currently that should be considered as they move forward. **The department requests that this information be sent to them no later than July 19.**

DEP has also advised that they are willing to meet with individuals and stakeholders through this process to discuss difficult points. If you have any interest in being part of any special stakeholder meeting please contact Rebecca Graham at [rgraham@memun.org](mailto:rgraham@memun.org) or 207-624-0101. If you would like to contribute information to the department's effort, please contact Elena Bertocci directly at [elena.bertocci@maine.gov](mailto:elena.bertocci@maine.gov) or 207-287-8556.