

April 23, 2019
Environment and Natural Resources Committee
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

To: Senator Carson, Representative Tucker, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Corliss C. Davis. I am a 72-year-old retired librarian and I live in Belfast. I am writing in support of LD 1532, An Act to Eliminate Single-use Plastic Carry-out Bags

As a Unitarian-Universalist for 54 years, I know that my faith teaches me to respect the “interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” The Maine Unitarian-Universalist State Advocacy Network has endorsed LD1532 - one of 12 environmental bills endorsed by us this year.

I am also a 2018 graduate of the Pen Bay Stewards program (<http://belfastbaywatershed.org/Pen-Bay-Stewards.php>) sponsored by the Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition. On May 8 of last year we visited the Shaw Institute (<https://www.shawinstitute.org/>), a marine and environmental research institute in Stonington, and learned about the threats posed by plastics:

“It is estimated that eight million metric tons of plastic now pollute the world’s oceans. Over time, most of this plastic breaks down into tiny pieces smaller than 5 millimeters, invisible to the naked eye, which are consumed by marine wildlife and contaminate the food we eat. These microplastics pose a serious risk to ocean and human health, from the Pacific coast to the beautiful waters of Maine.”

As a result of this research, the Shaw Institute supported LD 325 last year - *An Act to Strengthen Recycling of Single-use Plastic Shopping Bags*.

Plastic shopping bags have only been in use since 1977 and in our home we have long used only reusable bags for grocery shopping. As of January 1, 2018, my home town of Belfast banned single-use plastic bags. We are now one of 17 Maine towns to ban these bags. I’m so proud of my town when I shop at local stores and see customers happily putting their purchases into reusable bags.

By passing LD 1532 into law, you will be making the rules now in practice in these 17 scattered towns consistent across the state. LD 1532 requires a 5-cent fee on paper bags; requires those paper bags to be made of recycled content; and will not charge fees to SNAP and WIC participants.

For all these reasons, I urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS for LD 1532.

Sincerely,
Corliss C. Davis
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