

March 13, 2017

Good morning Senator Saviello, Representative Tucker, and esteemed members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources: my name is Melissa Gates, and I am the Northeast Regional Manager and a lobbyist for the Surfrider Foundation, whose New England Regional office is located in my town of residence, Cushing.

Today I am representing the Surfrider Foundation Maine Chapter and our thousands of members and supporters across the state in offering **strong opposition to LD683**, an act that would degrade the effectiveness of Maine's beverage container redemption program by removing bottles over 46-ounces from the refund requirement.


The Surfrider Foundation is an environmental nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves and beaches through conservation, activism, research and education. Our Maine Chapter volunteers are active across several coastal issue areas, including protecting public beach access, advancing smart coastal preservation and adaptation strategies, advocating for improved water quality and mitigating plastic marine debris.

LD683 is a bad policy that would undermine what is arguably Maine's most effective program for encouraging proper recycling of beverage containers, our beverage container redemption program. Maine's bottle bill went into effect in 1978, resulting in an estimated 90% of the bottles and cans sold in the state being recycled. This law helps keep Maine's ocean, waves and beaches and all of our communities cleaner by incentivizing the recycling of beverage containers.

Additionally, many Maine municipalities rely on the bottle redemption program to help them manage their solid waste. Any rollbacks to this program, such as the one presented here in LD683, would have significant, negative consequences for Maine's environment, residents and municipalities.

Large beverage companies have sought over the years to weaken our strong, effective, program for their own benefit and at what would be a very high cost to our healthy environment and municipalities. The Surfrider Foundation urges you to please act to protect this program and Maine by voting Ought Not to Pass today. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Melissa Gates
Northeast Regional Manager

