

**Testimony of Kirsten LC Figueroa, Commissioner
Department of Administrative and Financial Services**

**Before the Joint Standing Committees on
Appropriations and Financial Affairs and
Environment and Natural Resources**

**“An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures
of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain
Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State
Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2021,
June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023”**

March 5, 2021

Good morning Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. My name is Kirsten Figueroa, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services. I am here today to testify in support of the fiscal year 2022-2023 biennial budget bill, LD 221, specifically the item on today’s agenda for the Solid Waste Management Fund.

As Governor Mills said, at a time when Maine people are hurting, when small businesses are struggling to keep their doors open, when the ranks of the unemployed have swelled, and when we are fighting a deadly virus all around us, we are proposing balanced budgets as required by the Constitution that continue efficiencies, good fiscal management and curtailments to cover projected revenue shortfalls for all three fiscal years. They focus on combatting the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to rebuild the State’s public health infrastructure and protecting essential health care, education, and life-saving services. They do not change Maine tax rates and they maintain the Budget Stabilization Fund. With a future made unpredictable due to the ongoing pandemic, these budgets make good on the promise of government, which is to protect and support the wellbeing of our people and institutions.

Department of Administrative and Financial Services

The Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) consists of ten bureaus, a handful of boards and commissions, and more than 1,200 employees serving the public and all three branches of state government.

The Department has a broad range of responsibilities. We serve as the principal fiscal advisor to Governor Mills, prepare the state budget, coordinate the financial planning and programming activities of state agencies, prepare the financial records of the state, and advise the Maine Legislature on the economic status of the state and financial statutes of state government.

Additionally, DAFS oversees all aspects of: human resources, including employee benefits, contract negotiations, recruiting, retaining, training and performance; information technology services, including cyber security, data management, application development, project management, technology infrastructure, accessibility, and network services; maintenance, repairs and capital improvements of state-owned buildings and grounds; leased space; procurement, contracting and vendor management; state postal services; surplus property; tax collection, tax law and tax policy; and fleet management.

Various internal services for state agencies are provided by the Department, including review of accounting transactions and procedures and the implementation of account controls. We also administer the state's lottery operations, medical and adult use marijuana programs, and the sale of distilled spirits within Maine's borders.

DAFS also oversees three state-owned landfills.

The **Solid Waste Management Fund**, which can be found on **page A-33** of the budget document, contains a General Fund appropriation of \$816,851 each year and an Other Special Revenue Fund allocation of \$172,500 each year. This budget provides funds for the maintenance and operation of the Dolby Landfill in East Millinocket.

Fees assessed on the disposal of certain waste, such as tires and batteries, and fees for environmental abatement are deposited into the account and then shared between the Departments of Administrative and Financial Services, Environmental Protection, and Economic and Community Development.

The majority of the funds are transferred to the Department of Environmental Protection in support of enforcement and regulation, while the Department of Economic and Community Development and DAFS receive funds for the cost of overseeing and maintaining the State's landfills.

There are three state-owned landfills, only one of which is actively operating. The active landfill is Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town. Juniper Ridge is operated by a private entity through an operating agreement issued by the State. The second landfill is Carpenter Ridge, which is located in the T2 R8 unorganized territory west of Lincoln. Carpenter Ridge is a licensed landfill but is undeveloped at this time.

The third landfill, the Dolby Landfill in East Millinocket, is supported by the funds in this Program. The funds cover the costs of the landfill, as well as the treatment of the landfill leachate. The State and the Town of East Millinocket share in the cost of operations and maintenance for the wastewater treatment plant that services the town and the landfill. The Town is building a new treatment plant, which is scheduled for completion late this year. A new agreement for ongoing treatment of leachate will be developed when the new plant is operational.

There is one initiative in this Program. This initiative transfers one Public Service Coordinator I position and the associated All Other from the Department of Economic and Community Development to the Solid Waste Management Fund program within DAFS. The position is responsible for the Waste Management and Recycling Program that provides oversight of the State-Owned Landfill sites at Carpenter Ridge, Juniper Ridge and Dolby. The position and program were transferred to DECD after the dissolution of the former State Planning Office. This program is not an economic development program, is managed by DAFS/BGS through a Memorandum of Understanding, and both DAFS and DECD agree that operation of this program is better housed within DAFS. The corresponding initiative reducing headcount and allocation in DECD can be found on **page A-141**.

We would like to note and explain that the Personal Services reduction in DECD is different than the Personal Services increase in DAFS. There is a difference between the workers' compensation rates for DAFS and DECD.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you. I would be happy to address any questions you may have.



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



MELANIE LOYZIM
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY OF
MELANIE LOYZIM, COMMISSIONER
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 221 “AN ACT MAKING UNIFIED APPROPRIATIONS AND ALLOCATIONS
FOR THE EXPENDITURES OF STATE GOVERNMENT, GENERAL FUND AND
OTHER FUNDS AND CHANGING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE LAW
NECESSARY TO THE PROPER OPERATIONS OF STATE GOVERNMENT FOR THE
FISCAL YEARS ENDING JUNE 30, 2021, JUNE 30, 2022 AND JUNE 30, 2023”

SPONSORED BY REP. PIERCE

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND
FINANCIAL AFFAIRS
AND THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

HEARING DATE:

MARCH 5, 2021

Senators Breen and Brenner, Representatives Pierce and Tucker, and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Environmental and Natural Resources, I am Melanie Loyzim, Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), providing this public hearing testimony *in support of* DEP-related items in the Budget Office Document, the Governor’s FY22/23 Biennial Budget proposal.

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As Governor Mills said, at a time when Maine people are hurting, when small businesses are struggling to keep their doors open, when the ranks of the unemployed have swelled, and when we are fighting a deadly virus all around us, we are proposing balanced budgets as required by the Constitution that continue efficiencies, good fiscal management and curtailments to cover projected revenue shortfalls for all three fiscal years. They focus on combatting the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to rebuild the State's public health infrastructure and protecting essential health care, education, and life-saving services. They do not change Maine tax rates and they maintain the Budget Stabilization Fund. With a future made unpredictable due to the ongoing pandemic, these budgets make good on the promise of government, which is to protect and support the wellbeing of our people and institutions.

In proposing this budget, Governor Mills has made difficult decisions about many competing priorities, especially given the fiscal challenges facing the state due to the global pandemic. We understand that the needs are many and the State's resources are finite, and the Department supports this budget as a thoughtful and appropriate balancing of those priorities.

Since its inception over 40 years ago, the Maine DEP has been guided by a vision of a Maine where people understand that a healthy environment and a strong economy support one another, and where stewardship of our natural resources ensures a sustainable economy for future generations. Our natural resources are vast, including 19 million acres of forests; over 32,000 miles of rivers, streams, and brooks; 5,800 lakes and ponds; and waters of the Gulf of Maine; these resources have defined Maine and our economy for the full extent of our history. The Department's

mission is to prevent, abate and control the pollution of the air, water and land and preserve, improve and prevent diminution of the natural environment of the State.

DEP has 370 budgeted positions assigned to our four offices, located in Augusta, Bangor, Portland and Presque Isle. The FY21 budget for the agency is \$73M. Based on actual expenditures for FY20, 65% of costs came from Other Special Revenue Funds, 15% from Federal Expenditure Funds, 13% from the General Fund, and 7% from Bond Funds.

This testimony addresses each item that relates to DEP in Part A of the Budget document. This testimony proceeds sequentially, from beginning to end, starting with pages A-185 through A-194. This testimony briefly outlines the baseline budget for each Program and then details each “new” initiative proposed for the Budget Program.

OVERVIEW

DEP proposes 8 new initiatives in the FY 22/23 biennial budget, which can fall broadly into three categories:

- 1) Provide the necessary support by properly funding positions
- 2) Support the necessary purchases of capital equipment needed for program work, and
- 3) Support core function work of the Department

Briefly, let me explain:

1. **Position Reclasses.** Two initiatives request additional allocation to cover approved position reclassifications. These reclasses do not change DEP’s organizational structure or the work performed by staff. Instead, these initiatives adjust the pay scales for these positions to reflect the level of classification in which they are currently operating. We are dedicated to ensuring the appropriateness of account use by making these adjustments through the legislative process. These initiatives comprise a net increase of \$73,218 in Federal Expenditure Funds over the biennium.

2. **Capital Equipment.** This category relates to new capital equipment needs. For the upcoming biennium, DEP programs have identified the need for investments in capital equipment that are essential for the State to meet its obligation for investigating and cleaning up spilled hazardous materials and petroleum products, and for the State to meet its obligation to monitor and maintain baseline data about ambient air quality. The Department has five initiatives that affect Federal Expenditure Funds and Other Special Revenue Funds in three budget programs, with a net value of \$1,386,902 over the biennium.

3. **Supporting Core Functions.** This category contains one initiative which relates to the Department's ability to support and maintain Core Functions. It provides additional allocation for the Solid Waste Management Fund. Public Law 2011, chapter 544 increased the fees generated for the landfill closure and remediation cost-sharing program. This initiative would provide ongoing spending authority to pass through these funds to municipalities and public entities.

Overall, new initiatives proposed in the FY22-23 budget would increase the department's budget by \$1,960,120 over the biennium. This is comprised of net increases of \$161,620 in Federal Expenditure Funds and \$1,798,500 in Other Special Revenue Funds. There is no impact to the General Fund.

ADMINISTRATION – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION 0251

The first Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-186 is labeled “**Administration – Environmental Protection 0251**”. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund and Other Special Revenue Funds. The Other Special Revenue Funds component of this Budget Program is collected pursuant to DEP's Indirect Cost Allocation Plan. Both funding sources support centralized agency services that are administered by the Office of the Commissioner. The Commissioner's Office oversees and coordinates policy, strategic planning, regulatory programs, data management, support services, regional office management, Small Business Technical Assistance Program, Quality Assurance

and Quality Control programs, priority chemicals program, assistance, education and outreach efforts, and legislative services. There are no new initiatives for this Budget Program area.

AIR QUALITY - 0250

The second Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-187 is labeled “**Air Quality 0250**”. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund, Highway Fund, Federal Expenditure Funds and Other Special Revenue Funds. This program oversees air emission licensing, monitoring and compliance, meteorological research and associated analysis, and regional greenhouse gas-related efforts. This Budget Program implements state and federal laws in order to protect and improve outdoor air quality. There are no new initiatives for this Budget Program area.

BOARD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND 0025

The third Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-188 is labeled “**Board of Environmental Protection Fund 0025**”. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of Other Special Revenue Funds. The Board of Environmental Protection (“Board”) exists to hear appeals on permitting decisions, certain rulemaking functions, and to provide permitting decisions on certain types of applications. There are no new initiatives for this Budget Program area.

LAND RESOURCES Z188

The fourth Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-189 is labeled “**Land Resources Z188**”. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund and Federal Expenditure Funds. This program is responsible for administering the laws and regulations related to a wide range of land development activities, including large-scale developments, stormwater, impacts to natural resources (ponds, streams, wetlands, etc.), mining and gravel pits, shoreland zoning, and hydropower facilities. There are no new initiatives for this Budget Program area.

MAINE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND 0421

The fifth Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-190 is labeled “**Maine Environmental Protection Fund 0421**”. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund and Other Special Revenue Funds. This Budget Program administers select application processing fees that support environmental licensing, compliance, outreach, education and other activities. The Maine Environmental Protection Fund (MEPF) receives and administers these funds. The specific activities supported are implemented in each of the Department’s bureaus.

The one new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-190**. This initiative provides one-time funding of \$91,000 in FY22 and \$158,500 in FY23 in Other Special Revenue Funds for Capital Equipment purchases which are essential for the Department to meet its obligation to monitor and maintain baseline data about ambient air quality.

PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANT 0851

The sixth Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-191 is labeled “**Performance Partnership Grant 0851**”. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised exclusively of Federal Expenditure Funds. The Performance Partnership Grant is a federal grant and is awarded following a lengthy detailed agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and DEP for our work on federally delegated and other Air, Land, and Water Quality, and Remediation and Waste Management programs. The types of activities funded under this grant are outlined in the “purpose” and “organization” portions of the Budget Program Justifications provided for Air, Land, and Water Quality, and Remediation and Waste Management.

The first new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-191**. This initiative provides one-time funding of \$62,302 in FY22 and \$12,100 in FY23 in Federal Expenditure Funds for Capital Equipment purchases which are essential for the Department to meet its obligation to manage, protect, monitor and enhance the quality of Maine’s water resources.

The second new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-191**. This initiative provides funding of \$30,944 in FY22 Personal Services and \$7,928 in FY23 Personal Services for an approved reclassification of one Environmental Engineer position to an Environmental Engineer Specialist position.

The third new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-191**. This initiative provides funding of \$23,550 in FY22 Personal Services and \$10,796 in FY23 Personal Services for an approved reclassification of one Biologist II position to a Biologist III position.

The fourth new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-191**. This initiative provides one-time funding of \$14,000 in FY22 for Capital Equipment purchases of two additional Eureka water quality probes which are necessary to maintain both routine and emergency water sampling data needs.

REMEDICATION AND WASTE MANAGEMENT 0247

The seventh Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-192 is labeled **“Remediation and Waste Management 0247”**. The baseline budget presented shows this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund, Federal Expenditure Funds and Other Special Revenue Funds. This program administers Maine's oil, hazardous material and solid waste control programs, including: emergency response for oil and hazardous materials spills; regulation of above ground and underground oil storage facilities; development of natural resource damage assessment claims resulting from oil & hazardous substances; licensing of waste facilities, waste transporters, oil terminals, and spreading sites for septage, sludge and other residuals; oversight of asbestos management and disposal; and investigation and cleanup of uncontrolled hazardous substances sites.

The first new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-192**. This initiative provides one-time funding of \$679,950 in FY22 and \$351,050 in FY23 in Other Special Revenue Funds for Capital Equipment and Vehicle purchases that are essential for the Department to meet its obligation for investigating and cleaning up spilled hazardous materials and petroleum products.

The second new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-192**. This initiative was previously discussed on page 3 of my testimony. It increases allocation of Other Special Revenue Funds – All Other by \$250,000 in both FY22 and FY23 to align allocations with projected available resources for the landfill closure and remediation cost-sharing program. This initiative would replace annual financial orders that have authorized spending for this program since FY2015.

The third new initiative in this Budget Program is found on **page A-192**. This initiative provides one-time funding of \$18,000 in FY23 in Other Special Revenue Funds for Capital Equipment purchases of three additional Benzene monitor meters that are essential for the

Department to meet its obligation for investigating and cleaning up spilled hazardous materials and petroleum products.

WATER QUALITY 0248

The eighth Budget Program presented in the Budget document on page A-194 is labeled “**Water Quality 0248**”. The baseline budget presented shows that this Budget Program is comprised of General Fund, Federal Expenditure Funds and Other Special Revenue Funds. This program is responsible for administering the environmental laws that protect and improve the quality of Maine's surface and ground water through licensing, compliance and enforcement activities. The program provides support and oversight of wastewater treatment facilities, administers remediation grants for failed septic systems and boat pumpout facilities and assists with education and outreach efforts. There are no new initiatives for this Budget Program area.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this overview regarding our proposed biennial budget and I welcome any questions you may have.



**Testimony by William Norbert
Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager**

In Support of L.D. 221

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2021, June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023

**Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**

March 5, 2021

Senators Breen and Brenner, Representatives Pierce and Tucker, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Bill Norbert. I am the Governmental Affairs and Communications Manager at the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME). I live in Brunswick and am here to testify in support of the Governor's proposed initiative related to the **Waste Motor Oil Disposal Site Remediation Program**, which is found on page A- 209 of your printed materials.

The initiative adjusts funding to reflect the termination of the Waste Motor Oil Disposal Site Remediation Program. The premiums formerly imposed on sales of certain motor oil in the state have been discontinued by operation of law, and there is thus no longer a need for this line of the budget, which previously reflected the premiums collected by the state and directed to FAME to help pay off the bonds that had been issued under this program.

As you will recall, the Governor's Supplemental Budget proposes language in Part M, which we support, to repeal the program and direct the remaining funds (approximately \$4.3 million) to the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Waste Motor Oil Program was enacted by the 123rd Maine Legislature to provide financial assistance to eligible parties for response costs at waste motor oil disposal sites in Plymouth, Casco, Ellsworth, and Presque Isle. The program authorized FAME to issue bonds supported by the moral obligation of the state towards payment of such costs, and FAME issued \$14,495,000 in bonds, which have been paid back. In order for FAME to meet its obligations under the program (paying back bond holders), revenues generated by the premiums used to be

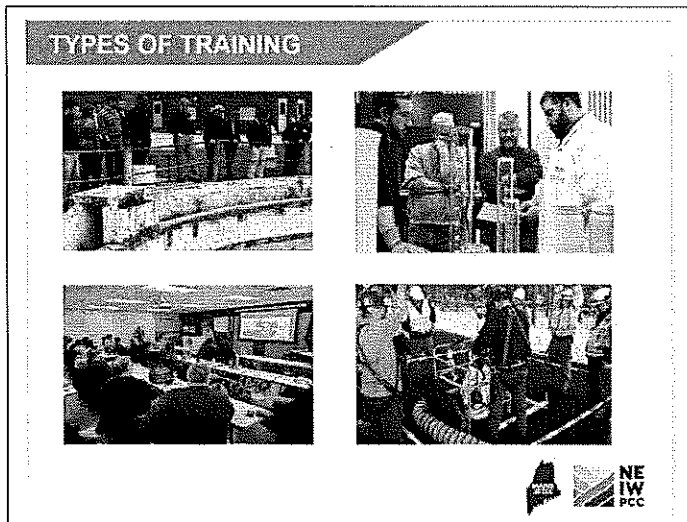
transferred to the Waste Motor Oil Revenue Fund. That is what this Other Special Revenue line used to represent. That is no longer necessary since the bonds have been paid off, the premiums have been terminated (as of October 2019), and the program is essentially ended.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.



I am testifying in favor of LD221 and the Governor's line item on page A-416 with \$52,950 for New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) and the **Maine Joint Environmental Training Coordinating Committee (JETCC).**

Since 1985 JETCC has served the citizens of Maine and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection by bringing laboratory, regulatory, and process training to water pollution control personnel throughout the State of Maine at minimal cost to municipalities.

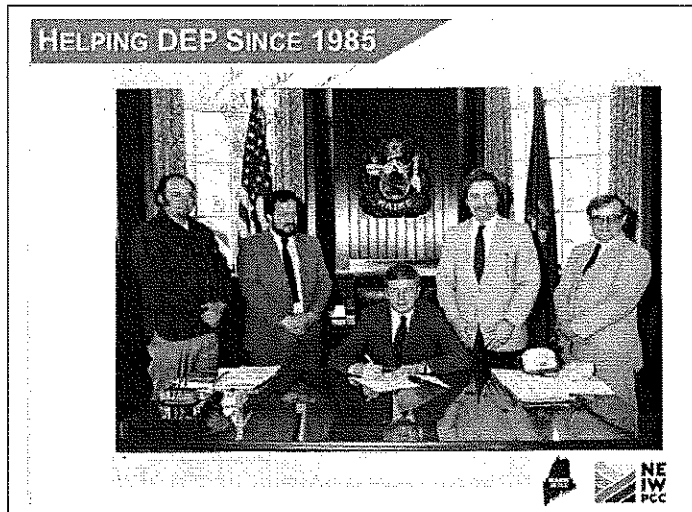


Staff working in our wastewater treatment facilities include 726 certified Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators

- 18 hours of continuing education is required every 2 years.

This training is regulated by the Maine DEP, and is legislatively mandated.

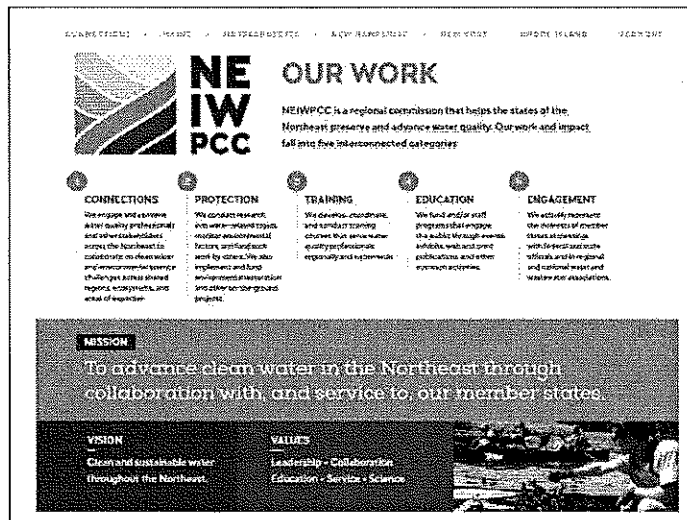
In the early 1980's it was clear Maine lacked resources to provide entry level and continuing education for wastewater treatment personnel.



After grass roots lobbying... JETCC was created through the Maine Legislature in 1985 as the Maine based program partner of NEIWPCC.

Increasingly, JETCC training also benefits Maine's licensed Drinking Water Operators who report to Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

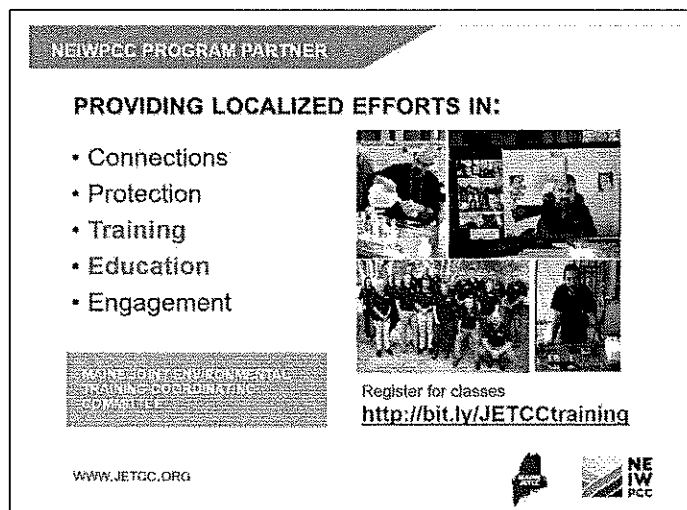
JETCC's work is administered through a contract between Maine Department of Environmental Protection and NEIWPCC.



NEIWPCC is a regional commission helping the states of the northeast preserve & advance water quality.

Five interconnected areas of impact:

- Connections
- Protection
- Training
- Education
- Engagement



JETCC

- Focuses on training and education
- Is non-advocacy & service oriented
- Has South Portland office with 2 FTE
- Educates protectors of Maine's environment and public health
- Relies on 100+ professionals each year volunteer as trainers and hosts

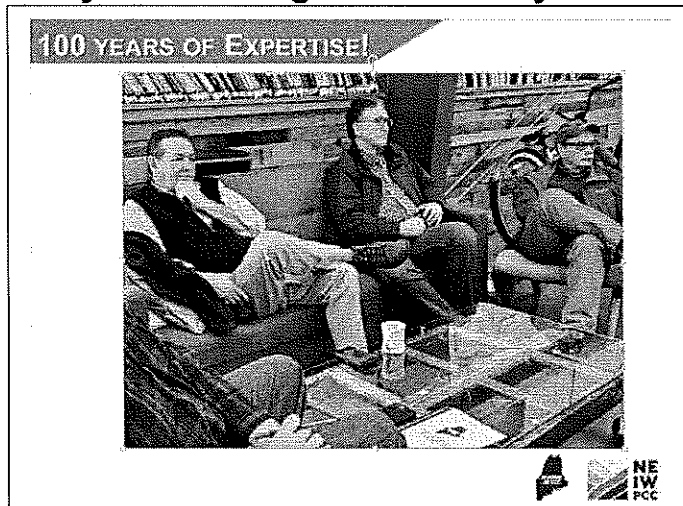
The JETCC Board of Directors is appointed by the Maine DEP Commissioner



JETCC volunteers represent

- Business
- Industry
- Municipalities
- State agencies
- Trade associations

Many careers began in the early 1970's.



New operators not keeping up with retirements.

After March 1, 2021 renewal date, the number of certified Maine operators dropped from 755 to 726, however 120 are inactive.

Since 2006 the number of certified operators ranged from 700 to 800.

- 37 new operators in the past 12 months
- March 1, 2021 - removed 50 operators
- March 1, 2021 - 120 operators are inactive

NEIWPCJ-JETCC is initiating a formal survey to determine retirement timelines and pending new hires.

Annual operating budget is \$115,000

- To provide 25 to 30 (six-hour) training programs per year

Our budget is:



- Supplemented by registration fees & sponsorships
- Leveraged by volunteer trainers and program hosts

General Fund appropriation of \$52,950

- Seeds our budget
- Enables us to handle other special projects

OTHER WW TRAINING

- Management Candidate School
- Wastewater Operator School
- North Country Convention
- Keeps us available to assist DEP

Sponsorships and registration fees fund:

Management Candidate Schools (MCS) Annually since 2009

- 194 Graduates from drinking water and wastewater facilities

Wastewater Operator Schools (WOS) 6-month, 12 session since 2017

- 60 graduates

North Country Convention

- Presque Isle biennial event


JETCC PARTNERS WITH:




JETCC helps Maine state agencies and trade associations combine resources

DEP CONTRACTS

- **Non-Point Source Training Center**
 - Erosion & Sediment Control
 - 8 New On-demand Training programs
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification**
 - Exams
 - Record Keeping
 - Communication



DEP Non-Point Source Training Center Certifying Contractors in Erosion Control:

- Administrative tasks
- Coordinate live in-person classes
- Assist with on-line training
- Process certification renewals



Maine Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Program Since 2006

- Record keeping
- Test administration
- General communication
- Renewal administration

Funded entirely by fees charged to operators and municipalities & participants.

2020-2021 TRAINING SUMMARY

- Fiscal 2020 courses
 - 17 in-person classes completed = 482 trained
 - 8 classes cancelled due to COVID
- Fiscal 2021... Looking Ahead
 - 21 virtual classes completed = 675
 - 10 pending through April
- Wastewater Operator School
 - 5 classes completed live
 - 7 classes completed virtually
- Management Candidate School
 - 4 classes completed
 - 7 postponed to reconvene in March






How COVID-19 has impacted us?

After priding ourselves in live face-to-face training and networking events we've had to pivot dramatically to do the same in a virtual setting.

WASTEWATER OPERATOR SCHOOL (WOS)

- WOS students are:
 - Long-term employees without formal training
 - Career changers
 - New operators
- WOS students commit to:
 - 12 classes
 - 6 months
 - 72 hours of training
 - 4 facility tours
- WOS receive:
 - WWTF expertise
 - Hands-on training
 - Exam preparation

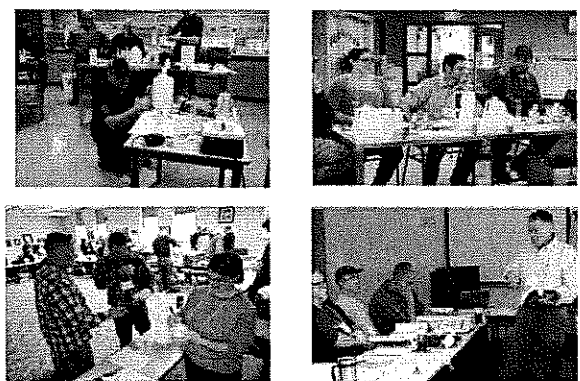
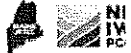
RECREATE

Wastewater Operator School (WOS) virtually

- 21 students committed & paid for 6 months of bi-weekly in-person classes
- Helped students engage virtually
- Coached volunteer trainers to become virtual trainers

Completed program through 8 virtual classes and outside assignments.

TYPES OF TRAINING

MODIFY

6-hour classes into 2 & 3 hour virtual learning events

21 two-hour virtual classes with 675 participants (42 TCH)

- 10 more classes through April.
- More in development...



Traditional Pre-Covid Training:

July 1, 2019 to March 2020

- 17 in-person classes with 482 participants. (121.5 TCH)

MANAGEMENT CANDIDATE SCHOOL (MCS)

- Leadership Skills
- Networking
- Relationship building
- Create a peer community
- 11 classes
- 12 months
- 72 hours of training
- Presentations
- Operator Exchange
- SAC Self-Study
- Homework

PAUSE

Management Candidate School


- 23 students committed & paid for year of monthly in-person classes
- Began November 2019
- Students voted twice to “pause”
- Wanting in person experience like the 194 previous graduates.

March 17, 2021

Virtual MCS classes begin

JETCC MISSION:

To help protect the environment, public health, and quality of life in Maine by coordinating affordable, high quality training that meets the needs of environmental professionals throughout the state.



\$\$\$ Impacts of COVID unclear

- Focus on standard services

Virtual classes require:

- More personnel time
- More events to meet training goals

2021 North Country Convention & Trade Show was cancelled

- Working with Maine Water Environment Association (MeWEA) and Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) on Virtual Spring & Fall trade shows

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www.jetcc.org

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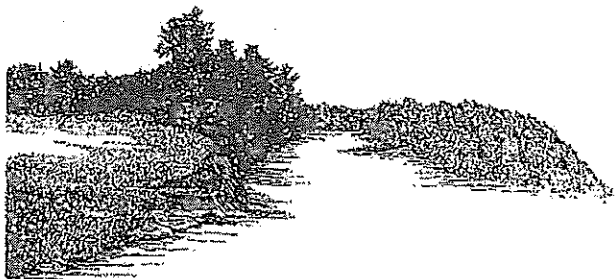


We are grateful to be at the current level in the 2022-2023 budget.

We appreciate the ongoing support of the legislature, in particular the 129th who helped to get us to this level of funding.

We thank you for placing trust in this valuable program that benefits every community in the State of Maine.

Leeann Hanson



Saco River Corridor Commission

"Communities Working Together To Protect Our Rivers"

March 4, 2021

Appropriation Committee Chairs, Senator Cathy Breen and Representative Teresa Pierce and Environment and Natural Resource Chairs, Senator Stacy Brenner and Representative Ralph Tucker, and members of the Joint Committees, thank you for your time and consideration of the Saco River Corridor Commission's programs.

Over 47 years ago, a group of citizens from the Saco River Basin gathered to discuss the importance of clean water and a plan that would ensure clean water for future generations to come. This group approached the Maine State Legislature with their concerns and ideas. In 1971, the 105th Maine State Legislature concluded that the Saco River, and its major tributaries, the Ossipee and Little Ossipee Rivers, "are natural rivers of great scenic beauty and unique character, possessing outstanding recreational, historical, educational, scientific, cultural, wilderness and environmental values of great present and future benefit to this generation and all succeeding generations." The Legislature further found, "due to their locations and the trends which are threatening their values that it is in the best interests of the people of the State to provide for the orderly protection and proper development of the values of the Saco River Corridor." To make sense of these conclusions the legislature established the Saco River Corridor and subsequently created the Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC) to carry out the purpose of the Saco River Corridor Act.

Today very little has changed. The river is relatively unspoiled, and many of the important characteristics of the rivers are the same. If anything, the one major issue that has changed is the threat of development. Over time, development in Corridor towns, especially in York County, has increased dramatically. When these issues were originally discussed in 1973, they were discussed in the context of their importance to the region and the State. At that time, the legislature was concerned that a system was needed to ensure that all of the existing important values and characteristics of the Corridor were protected into the future. It was in this light that the Saco River Corridor Commission was created. These values found in the Saco Basin are still of immeasurable importance and still intact because of the Saco River Corridor Commission's work. For 47 years, the Commission has been protecting the Saco, Ossipee, and Little Ossipee Rivers, an important source of drinking water, through development oversight.

The priorities of the Commission's programs include:

- ensuring the drinking water quality that currently exists in the Saco River basin is preserved;
- preserving the visually scenic quality of the Corridor, with a rural character that supports the tourist economy of the region, and maintaining high quality natural resource values;
- providing the Corridor town population with the information they need to make informed decisions concerning land and water use within the Corridor; and
- conserving and protecting the unique characteristics of the Saco River Basin.

There are 20 towns within the Saco River Corridor, beginning in Fryeburg, Maine, and following the rivers to the ocean in Biddeford and Saco. Each of these municipalities has an opportunity to appoint a member and an alternate to represent their town on the Commission's regional board. The Commissioners serve 3-year terms and meet twice a month to review development applications along the rivers. Commission jurisdiction lies within 500 feet of the Saco, Ossipee, and Little Ossipee Rivers and extends up to 1,000 feet from the rivers in areas of the 100-year floodplain. Within this Corridor, the Commission oversees three main program elements. First, the Land-Use Regulatory Program, in effect as Maine State law since 1973. Second is the Saco River Basin Water Quality Monitoring Program that began in 2001, and third a conservation and environmental education component. The Commission's programs protect public health, safety, and quality of life for the State of Maine by regulating land and water uses and protecting and conserving the region's unique and exceptional natural resources.

The Commission uses 40% of the General Fund appropriations received to finance the water quality program. In 2001, the Commission created the RIVERS (Regional Interstate Volunteers for the Ecosystems and Rivers

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of Saco) water quality monitoring program to establish a baseline of the water quality of the rivers within the Corridor and monitor for hotspots or trouble areas that may indicate declining water quality. The program includes 37 sampling sites along 130 river miles, tested bi-weekly from May to September every year.

Recognizing that the surface water in the Saco Basin originates in New Hampshire, the Commission staff works with N.H. County Conservation Districts, the staff at the N.H. Department of Environmental Services (DES), the counterpart to our Maine DEP, and with other conservation groups working in the watershed. As part of the program, the Green Mountain Conservation Group monitors 28 sample site locations in the Ossipee Lake Watershed. The programs have over 30 dedicated volunteers who help staff collect water samples throughout the entire Saco River Watershed. The program is designed as one water quality monitoring program that encompasses one watershed, two States, and 26 towns.

The ME DEP, NH DES, and EPA renewed the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for the program in 2020. The renewal process occurs every five years and ensures quality control, so the data collected is scientifically sound and useful for the State. Systematic water quality monitoring of the Saco River drainage, Ossipee lake, or its tributaries had not occurred before this program. Currently, 30 sites are tested for non-point source contaminants. These non-point sources include pollution-producing entities not tied to a specific origin, such as failing septic systems, runoff, washing pollutants from roads into water bodies, and runoff carrying sediment and agricultural chemicals from lawns and fields.

The importance of this data cannot be overstated. Last year's sampling identified specific sites where tested parameters are approaching the lower limits set for class AA waters, thus indicating diminished water quality. Sampling identified increases in nitrogen, phosphorus, and bacteria approaching nuisance levels at certain sites. The SRCC staff and volunteers will continue to monitor these sites for improvement or decline. Every year, the Commission analyzes the data collected for each town, including positive or negative trends to water quality and recommendations to resolve any issues observed. This analysis helps towns make informed land-use decisions that may impact water quality, identify problem areas along the rivers, and resolve these problems.

The program includes E. coli testing weekly during the summer months at popular swimming and recreational areas to protect public health. The Commission notifies the town when E. coli samples are over the acceptable State limits so the town can post an advisory warning at the beach or recreational area. A sample is collected the next day to reevaluate swimming conditions. This program is also utilized by the towns and the Maine Water Company as a potential early warning system for their public water supply operations.

The Commission works closely with member municipalities coordinating with Code Enforcement officers, town management, regional and town planners, and citizens to ensure proper development and planning in the Corridor across the board. The collaboration the Commission's work promotes between State, local, and regional agencies fosters a high degree of teamwork to achieve the mutual goal of appropriate and planned development that will not diminish our communities' natural resources, or the quality of life in the region. The Commission has an ESRI, Arc-Online digital mapping system that shows the Commission's jurisdictional boundaries throughout the Corridor in all 20 municipalities. The mapping system includes informational layers such as FEMA flood maps, Corridor districts, jurisdictional boundaries, conservation areas, and individual tax map parcel information. This system is available to the public, and municipalities and citizens heavily rely on the maps to plan appropriate and balanced land uses within the Corridor. The mapping system has dramatically increased the Commission's ability to navigate complex and difficult land ownership issues, boundaries, and other development concerns.

For the past year, the Commission has been working in collaboration with FB Environmental and the Green Mountain Conservation Group on a report of a 10-year analysis of the water quality of the Saco River Basin. The report will include an analysis of the data collected from the SRCC's water quality monitoring program. The report's findings will be used to work with Corridor towns to resolve potential long term water quality issues. A real-time data analysis tool is being developed for the Arc map system that will allow users to see each sample site's water quality trends visually. Citizens and towns will have the ability to see the big picture of the state of existing water quality in their town and throughout Western Maine.

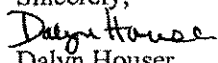
The Commission also provides public outreach and education through programs with local schools and public meetings. The Commission prioritizes public education within our communities to encourage the stewardship of the Corridor's natural resources. The Saco River Corridor includes a wide array of critical wildlife habitats that support a diverse wildlife population, many natural and scenic recreational opportunities, and supplies clean drinking water to our region. These assets provide ample opportunity to discuss educational topics ranging from wildlife and critical wildlife habitats to water quality and pollutants that may contaminate our waterways to topics involving drinking water sources.

The pace of development along the river corridor continues to increase. People's interest in living in Maine and especially along a water body has increased. Many people come from outside of Maine for recreation or to construct second homes. They also come here because of Maine's clean natural environment. People wish to relocate from more densely developed locations outside of Maine, where natural resources have been compromised to a great degree, to Western Maine, where resources are still abundant. It's an interesting paradox that once they arrive in Maine, they wish to recreate the very location they are trying to escape from. Often, irrational or angry arguments are provided to support their reasons for wanting to remove most of the trees on a small lot and to have a house, septic system, and lawn ten feet from the water. Maine is one of the few places in the Northeast where it is still possible to actively protect our natural resources before they are gone versus planning to restore our resources after they are gone.

For the Commission's appropriation of \$46,960, the State of Maine receives the benefit of many thousands of hours of work and expertise from over 60 volunteers and staff helping to protect the waterways and adjacent land. In 2020, the Commission reviewed 120 applications for development in the Corridor, increasing 30% from the applications reviewed in 2019. The review of each application includes a site visit to each property, a review of soils information, forestry and habitat information, measurements of setbacks and water frontage, slopes and septic designs, lot coverage, erosion and sedimentation controls, and other site specific information. Along with the recent increase in development, the Commission has increased compliance checks, tree removal site visits, and Orders requiring remediation of violations of the Act. The Commission staff visited 165 properties last year for pre-application site visits, compliance checks, tree removal requests, and violation resolution. The General Fund appropriations support the Water Quality Program and five staff members, including the Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, Compliance Evaluator, Water Quality Program Manager, and Water Quality Coordinator.

The other major contribution to the Commission's budget is generated from a special revenue fund known as "The Saco River Corridor Fund," established by the legislature in 1997, whereby the Commission collects a fee of 1% on the sale of water and fire protection services by a "Water Utility" provider which draws water from the Saco river for sale and distribution to its customers. The Maine Water Company is the only "Water Utility" provider the Commission collects this fee from. The amount collected has increased as the Maine Water Company has expanded operations and had a rate increase go into effect in December 2017.

The legislature of the 1970's created a wonderful and well thought out program in the Saco River Corridor Commission. It is no coincidence that the only river in the State to have a regional, citizen-based group watching over it is arguably the cleanest river in the State. The Saco River itself is relied upon exclusively for drinking water purposes in Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach, and portions of Scarborough. Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Wells are also clients of the Maine Water Company, using the drinking water when aquifer supplies are insufficient. All told, these municipalities withdraw 2 billion gallons of water from the river annually. The appropriation of \$46,960 from the State General Fund allows the Commission to preserve and protect many of the natural resource values within the Saco River Corridor and the watershed. The Commission accomplishes a lot, fueled by the dedication of volunteers from the Saco River Basin communities who want to protect this precious natural resource. Thank you for your continued support, time, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dalyn Houser
Executive Director