

Dill's Bill LD 2135

Chairs Brenner and Gramlich, and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am testifying Neither For Nor Against Rep. Dill's LD 2135. The Bill mentions "...Juniper Ridge Landfill is creating a hardship for the City of Old Town and its residents...", and I'd like to share with you some personal experiences of citizens who live with 2 miles of JRL. The landfill gases and noxious odors are carried on the northeast breezes into our homestead. At times, it can be difficult to breathe the foul air. Massive amounts of sewage sludge deliveries have exacerbated this problem. Hydrogen sulfide gas is toxic and deleterious to health, even at relatively low levels.

On Christmas Day we hosted 11 people including our children and grandchildren, who were visiting from Colorado. After a delicious feast we all strolled through our beautiful forest down to Pushaw Stream. On the way back, someone asked "What's that smell?" Our outdoor experience was spoiled by the stench of JRL. Their license includes language stating that Casella has the ability to control odors. When we have called in odor complaints for the past half year or so, Casella's responder states that they are trying as hard as they can to control the odors but cannot. This admission is in contrast to their excuses and denials of the previous years. At times we are faced with the choice of either endangering our health or working and recreating on our own property, or being imprisoned in our own home.

I have appealed JRL licensing decisions at least 6 times to the BEP over the 20 years of JRL operation by Casella. I have argued that their importation of wastes from beyond Maine's Reduction at the Source, Reuse, Recycling, Composting, Waste to Energy and Landfilling as the least desirable outcome. Casella refuses to divulge where the actual Points of Discard of these wastes are, so that cannot be an evaluation of Compliance with the Hierarchy. LD 2135 requires consistency with the Waste Policy.

What really hurts is seeing that Maine has focused strictly on Juniper Ridge as a disposal site for Maine's wastes. We are living in a Sacrifice Zone! There are 16 counties in Maine, and the only three state landfills are in Penobscot County. There is no entity responsible for securing additional landfill sites. Bring back the Maine Waste Agency!

As a member and former co-chair of Don't Waste Maine, I would like to support Rep. Dill's Bill, if the following conditions could be included:

1. A comprehensive review of JRL should be conducted- are terms still relevant after 20 years?
2. A thorough review of Casella's performance as Operator.
3. Extension of the OSA should be prohibited until these appraisals are complete for consideration.
4. No license for expansion of JRL should be issued until operations at JRL can be structured for regulations that preserve disposal capacity for true Maine Waste (the original Point of Discard within Maine's borders).
5. No JRL license for Expansion should be issued without meeting the Environmental Justice requirement of the Public Benefit Determination.
6. LD 2135 should be amended to meaningfully include members of the Public and representation from the Penobscot Indian Reservation.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Spencer

Old Town, Maine

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