

LD 1065 Testimony In Support

Senator Chair Tepler, House Chair Dudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Ed Spencer and I live in West Old Town, less than two miles from our state-owned Juniper Ridge Landfill. I am writing in support of LD 1065. Passage of this vital Bill would bring Maine into the fold of New England States with Food Waste reduction laws. This would be a great way to help us meet our overall waste reduction goals of 50%, with a 5% reduction in overall wastes every five years.

After Vermont passed their food waste laws, they found that food donations to charity tripled. Massachusetts diverts 380,000 pounds of food waste each year from its waste deposits. There are certainly successful efforts already underway to properly deal with organic wastes, notably Exeter Agri-Energy. Just recently there was an article in the BDN about a new composting service startup in the Winterport/Belfast area. Hopefully you will hear testimony from like-minded entrepreneurs building a new Maine economy.

There are two active Waste to Energy (WTE) facilities in Maine, and the PERC plant in Orrington hopes to restart later this year. Organics removal would help these operate more efficiently and therefore more cleanly. This is because organics tend to be wet and very low in BTU capacity. Diversion from landfills and incinerators would save towns money on their tip fees. If Maine is ever to achieve our climate change goals, we have to embrace food waste reduction through a variety of means including education of the Public.

Landfills are the third-largest sources of methane gas releases in the United States. We have heard that methane is an extremely powerful greenhouse gas, but there is a sort of silver lining to that fact. This is because methane, unlike CO₂, only lingers in our atmosphere for about a dozen years. This means that methane reductions now will yield serious overall greenhouse gas reduction in little more than a decade.

I feel the need to notify you that currently our state landfill, JRL, has acres of its covering removed so that Casella can put more wastes into their permitted space after the huge pile has slumped due to decay. Without organics in that mountain, the landfill gases now spewing into the air we breathe would not be as deleterious to our health. Let's work together, one house, neighborhood, and town at a time to reduce the amounts of food wasted and help feed needy Mainers.

Waste Not, Want Not!

Ed Spencer, former co-chair of Don't Waste Maine

West Old Town