

LD 920 Testimony Neither For Nor Against

Dear Senate 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, within 2 miles of the state landfill (Juniper Ridge Landfill). I am testifying Neither For Nor Against LD 920, and would like to share some concerns. This appears to be an attempt by Rep. Campbell to assist the owners of the former PERC waste to energy facility in Orrington in their efforts to resume operations.

In general, I am neutral on the efficacy of WTEs (incinerators) either on their own or in comparison to landfills. Both options have serious negative environmental consequences for disposal of wastes. As a citizen of Old Town, I support our membership in the PERC community, as opposed to the MRC group. As we know, neither one has done much waste processing or reduction since their split after the PERC/MRC's subsidized electricity contract expired on March 31st, 2018. For seven years there have been approximately zero tons run through these facilities, whereas when they combined forces prior to 2018 hundreds of thousands of tons per year were reduced greatly in volume. Sending our waste to JRL has resulted in highly offensive odors, scenes of eagles feeding on garbage, and increased greenhouse gas production. This has been a horrible ordeal for many Old Town, Alton, and Indian Island citizens. I had to call in two odor complaints in the last week.

When I see language in this Bill like "...methods to improve the licensing process.", it makes me shudder, having seen what really happened when JRL was licensed. Corners were cut, changes made to the contract without notifying DEP or the legislature, public or Advisory Committee, and some might call this "efficient". There is danger that legislation that on the surface might assist PERC regain function could actually reduce obstacles for JRL expansion or other waste facilities to develop without full Public involvement.

Similarly, creating a "stakeholders group" sends a shudder through those of us who have been repeatedly denied inclusion as concerned members of the Public while industry pressures DEP to cut corners. Any group should include citizens of the effected areas including the 180 towns involved. We all hope that both PERC and the MRC are back in business processing curbside waste after removal of recyclables and organics by the end of this year, so hearing the need for a Review by year end 2025 is concerning.

As someone who has been extremely involved in waste issues for over 20 years, I would like to offer the new PERC ownership some advice related to this Bill. For starters, make sure that the incinerator includes the very best pollution control

technology, period! I am also in favor of possible State subsidy of such equipment as a means to protect society and save health care costs. For example, in 2004 FAME offered Casella Waste Systems a bond of \$25 million, terms of which allowed them to pay only the interest on that amount for 20 years! After getting the best pollution controls, the next focus should be on reducing the organic food wastes contained in their inputs. They should also restrict inputs to materials discarded for the first time within Maine's borders. Towns should be encouraged to reduce waste tonnages, not required to meet minimum amounts or be fined.

In summary, I am neither For Nor Against LD 920, but am in favor of having a responsible alternative to landfilling our wastes.

Respectfully submitted,

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

West Old Town