

**Testimony to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
April 28, 2025**

Re: Support for LD 1349: An Act to Require Legislative Approval for a Contract to Operate the Juniper Ridge Landfill

Juniper Ridge is Maine's only active, state-owned landfill. As such, it is the concern of all Mainers, and any contract for its operation must be made with the full participation of the Maine Legislature.

The need for this legislation derives from several factors:

1. Juniper Ridge must align with Maine's environmental goals and solid waste hierarchy.
2. The landfill was intended for Maine's solid waste, but it is accepting an increasing amount of out-of-state waste.
3. It has been the source of ongoing problems, such as fires, odors, noise, and traffic. For many years, residents of Old Town and members of the Penobscot Nation have expressed concern about these issues, generally with little recourse or response. These serious public health and safety matters warrant greater scrutiny.
4. The landfill is situated near ecologically sensitive areas and Penobscot Nation lands, and its leachate has long poisoned the Penobscot River with PFAS and other toxins.
5. Residents of towns beyond the immediate area are affected when their municipalities transfer waste to the landfill, for which they pay tipping fees, and of course by the downstream effects of PFAS pollution.

Contracts for the state-owned landfill's operation are long-term and not to be taken lightly. No further contracts, or contract renewals, should be awarded without legislative approval. The involvement of our elected officials, who are accountable to the people of Maine, prioritizes the public good over private gain. Ensuring legislative approval for future landfill contracts provides for an open, visible process to evaluate landfill operations. I urge you to support LD 1349.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

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