

Bill Lippincott Hampden Maine. April 28, 2025

Comments on LD 1604 An Act to Protect Groundwater and Surface Waters from Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances from Landfill Leachate

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Bill Lippincott; I'm a resident of Hampden, site of the Pine Tree Landfill, which is closed but still contaminating streams and groundwater

I am submitting comments in favor of **LD 1604** *An Act to Protect Groundwater and Surface Waters from Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances from Landfill Leachate*

I'm the former Chair of Don't Waste Maine, a coalition of people around the state advocating for responsible solid waste policies that protect the health of communities most at risk from negative impacts of landfill, incinerator, and other waste processing facilities.

Since DEP started requesting operators to test for PFAS in landfills, we've discovered that many, including **the Pine Tree Landfill, [PTL], have very high levels; at PTL, from 1800 ng/l to 2700 ng/l in the leachate. The state drinking water standard is 20 ng/l; the EPA standard is 4.** But this year, DEP is not requiring operators to test for PFAS, and to date, Casella Waste Systems, which owns PTL, has not. *See first map*

It's not surprising that PTL should have such high numbers; the cap over the original, "conventional" landfill was **sludge amended soil** - likely with high levels of PFAS chemicals. This "cap" was entirely permeable, so that rainwater could wash through that soil and carry contamination throughout the landfill. The original, "conventional" PTL landfill was also unlined, which means there was, and still is, a major problem with groundwater contamination.

I've included two maps which demonstrate the problem

PTL was closed and capped in 2010 so we've now had **15 years of remediation** and while **contamination levels** have gone down in some areas of the landfill, **many are still very high**, not even close to required state standards, and some areas are still going up.

See my comments about the slow pace of remediation at PTL at the end of my testimony

There is no mention of PFAS in any PTL annual reports. You can access prior PFAS test results on the Town Of Hampden website, but they are incomprehensible unless you have a PhD in chemistry, so there's a need for public reporting of PFAS in a format that's digestible to layman.

(In Hampden, we have an environmental engineer, Matt Reynolds, who puts out a review of PTL water quality, usually once a year, which recently has included some PFAS results presented in a readable fashion. But to my knowledge neither Old Town or Norridgewock has an independent engineer for the town issuing such a review of Juniper Ridge or the Crossroads Landfill).

We know that there is high levels of groundwater contamination in some sectors of the Pine Tree Landfill, and we've now discovered that the landfill has very high levels of PFAS in the leachate. So we need to begin to test residential wells in the vicinity of the landfill to find out if people's drinking

water is safe. This is a real concern: all of residences in Hampden that live in the vicinity of the landfill have drilled or dug wells - there is no town water.

By law, Casella is responsible for any contamination originating from the landfill. DEP requested Casella to test leachate for PFAS over the last three years, but there is no requirement to test landfills for PFAS this year.

Much of the PFAS and other landfill contamination is going right into the groundwater or into the stream or tributaries of the stream. PTL also pumps the leachate that it can collect to the Bangor wastewater treatment plant. Unfortunately, that plant has no process designed to treat PFAS, so after going to the plant, the PFAS chemicals that the plant is unable to treat go directly into the Penobscot River. This testimony is focussed on the Pine Tree Landfill, but I am quite certain that similar problems exist at the Juniper Ridge Landfill and the Crossroads Landfill and other landfills around the state

So I urge members of the committee to pass LD 1604 - to require annual PFAS testing, to issue reports on PFAS testing results in a fashion readable to the public, and to start treating this leachate before it goes into the Penobscot or the Kennebec or any other body of water.

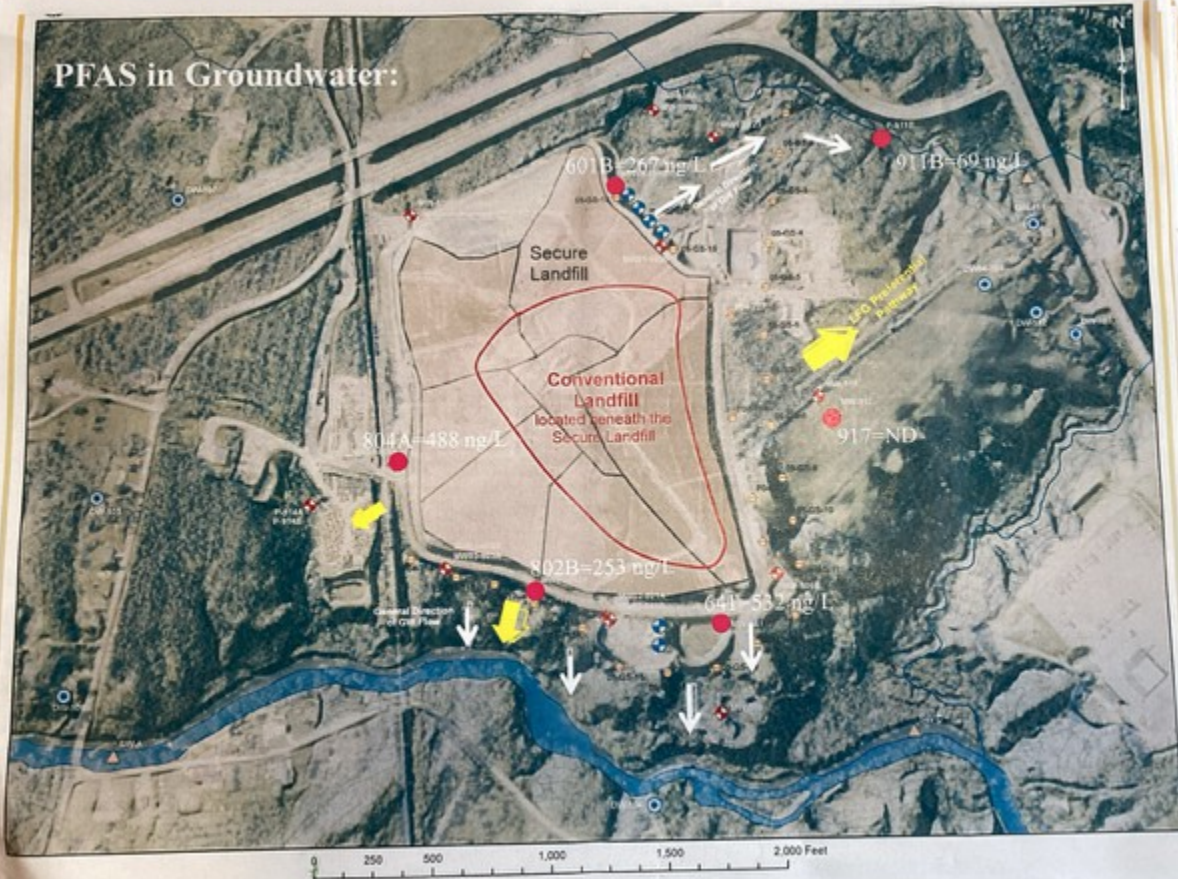
Thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions

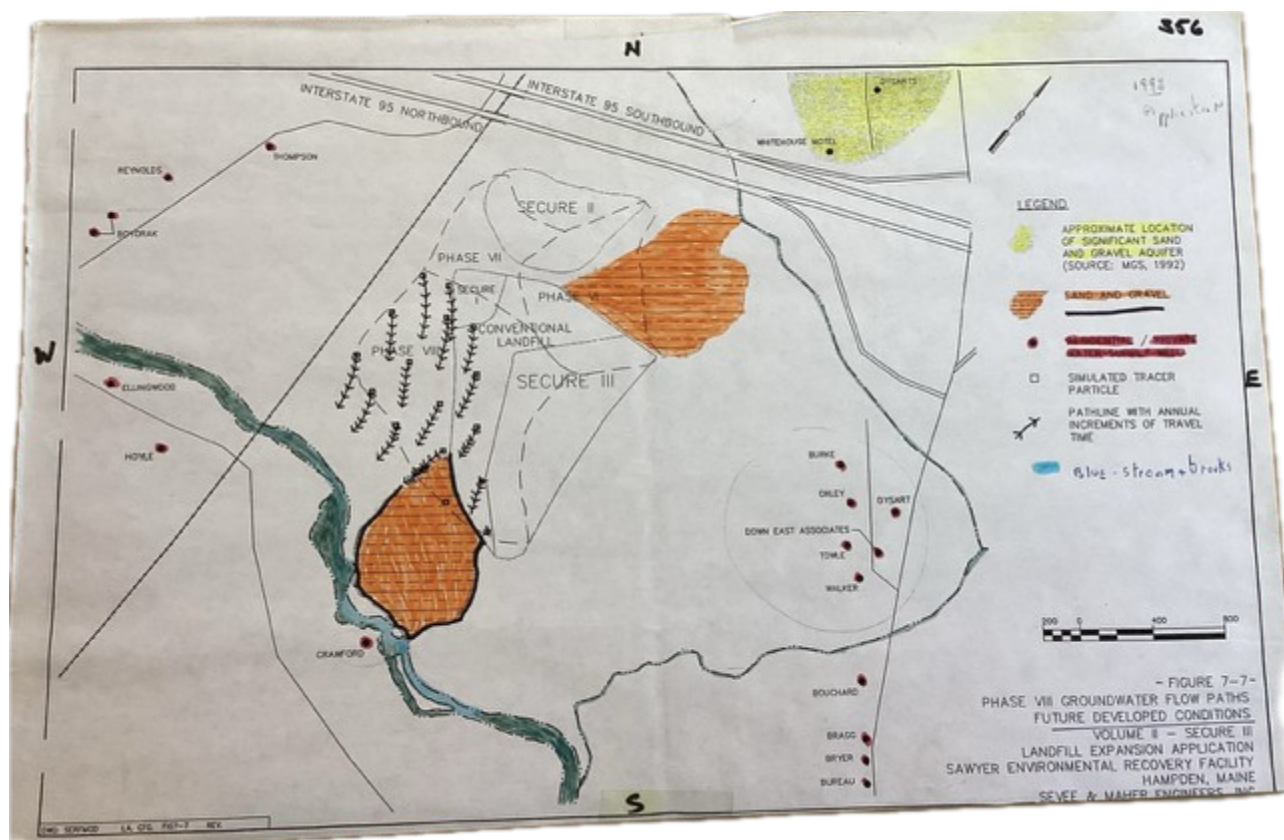
Bill Lippincott
Hampden, Maine

Two maps follow. The first, from the town's environmental engineer, Matt Reynolds, from 2024, shows PFAS contamination from the Pine Tree Landfill and some of the paths that contamination takes to the Souadabscook Stream and one of its tributaries. PFAS has been in the news a lot lately as it's turned up in farmers' fields, closing down dairy farms and vegetable farms, and showing up in people's well water, making that water undrinkable. The toxic effects on humans include liver damage, thyroid disease and cancer. **Recent results of testing for PFAS at the landfill indicate extremely high levels, as high as 2700 ng/l.** The state drinking water standard - the only standard Maine has for PFAS, is **20 ng/l.** This is not good news for the stream and the fish and wildlife that inhabit the stream. Or the Penobscot River, a few miles downstream from the landfill. **Or for the residents of Hampden that have deep bedrock wells in the vicinity of the landfill**

The other map shows how Casella in 1998 predicted PTL groundwater would flow after they expanded the landfill. They were right. Contaminates from the landfill flow directly into the stream **(they also flow into its tributaries on other maps in their application and into the groundwater.)** We knew at the time when they were planning on expanding that mercury, lead, arsenic and other heavy metals, industrial sludge, incinerator ash, asbestos and VOCs were some of the many contaminants in the landfill's waste. **Only recently have we learned about PFAS chemicals, but they have certainly been leaching into the groundwater** and the stream for as long as all of those other toxic chemicals. **The red dots in the second map indicate location of residential homes in the vicinity of the landfill, all of which have either dug or drilled wells.** There is no town water in this part of Hampden.

PFAS in Groundwater:





The Slow Pace of Remediation at the Pine Tree Landfill

we are now on the 15th year of a 30 year remediation period for Casella to meet state standards for groundwater, and for other criteria

There are six extraction wells that have been in operation since 2004, as part of DEP's corrective action program for Casella's expansion of the landfill

While there has been remediation connected with gas migration since the landfill closed (probably since Casella could make money selling the methane as much as for containing contaminate migration), Casella and DEP have dragged their heels on further extraction wells; **they're finally in the process of installing another extraction well in the southwest corner of the landfill, 15 years since remediation was to begin** following the closure of the landfill.

In **2016**, the Pine Tree Landfill: PTL, **reported a breach/leak in their leachate recirculation system** - a system that has been in place since 2012 - to generate methane for their gas collection system. Two of the four trenches were closed at that time: LRT 1 and LRT 4* (In 2015 Matt's report noted a rise in concentrations in this area, before the breach was discovered, so there's a strong possibility that the breach had already happened)

At that time, **it was noted that there were high elevations /groundwater contamination in wells 1802B and 1803 A in the southwest corner of the landfill and that the breach was a prime suspect as the cause.** Since then, high concentrations in those two wells have continued to rise, or have not made significant progress in coming down despite the ongoing remediation in place.

There have been calls since then for additional remediation, and there have been meetings with DEP and Casella, **but no action taken.** I recall a meeting in **2020** with Susan Parmalee, then DEP project manager of PTL, with the town, where this need was discussed.

Finally in the fall of 2024 work began on the installation of the first extraction well since the landfill closed. Because of some construction issues, work will not be finished until sometime this year.

Matt Reynolds in his letter to me of September 26, 2024* * on the town link said Casella planned to install an additional extraction well **near MWO2-801 A, B and MWO3-803 A, B** “in 2024 or early 2025” **because of continued high concentrations in this area.**

So Casella is finally taking action on contamination they’re responsible for - nine years after the breach in their recirculation trenches

* Scroll down in the link below to:

2016 Drumlin post closure monitoring and review update August 7, 2017 p.7-8 on the link

**Drumlin .. 8-12-24.response to Questions on the link:

<https://www.hampdenmaine.gov/landfill>