

LD 1782 Testimony in Favor

Senator Tepler, Rep. Doudera, and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Ed Spencer and I live in West Old Town withing two miles of the Juniper Ridge Landfill, owned by the State of Maine. Since the creation of JRL I have been forced to spend huge amounts of time trying to understand the forces behind JRL, the broken promises by State and corporate officials, and seeking avenues to improve the situation which at times is a horror show of landfill stench and harmful gases and lack of local control.

I am here to speak in favor of LD 1782 which is an attempt to reset the terms and rules of the first functioning Maine State landfill. We wish these rules had been developed by legislators in the past, because what has happened is that the waste industry has written their own rules for operating JRL and they are in opposition to what is good for the people of Old Town, Alton, Indian Island and all citizens of Maine.

Before the State took ownership of JRL, we were told that there would be NO out of state waste or municipal solid waste coming to the landfill. For the last seven years almost 100% of the curbside waste from 180 towns has been dumped at JRL, much of it unsorted and without recyclable materials removed. In addition, wastes classified as Alternative Daily Cover (ADC), which comprises about one-sixth of all waste inputs to JRL, pays no fees to either Old Town or Alton. And I must add that one change I would make in LD 1782 would be to include the town of Alton in additional compensation. A \$5 fee on each ton of waste deposited at JRL would start to compensate for the problems of being a host community, and it should be without any exceptions, a fee on all wastes. ADC is a waste industry scam, in my opinion, and is even classified as Recycled material by our DEP.

Another change I would consider is to limit the time of free disposal of local wastes at JRL until the PERC/EPEC waste to energy plant becomes functional at some blessed future date. As a host community, we should set a good example and utilize the highest rungs available on the Hierarchy scale, which has landfilling as the least desirable option. Old Town does single-stream recycling, as well as Pay to Throw, unlike most of the towns now sending their trash to JRL.

Incentivizing better compliance with the waste hierarchy could be achieved by enacting LD 1782. Putting a higher fee on MSW that is unsorted makes sense, as does rewarding towns who help citizens remove recyclable materials and compost their organic waste. The rules and guidelines laid out in Section 2 (4)(A) make sense. One in particular is of extreme importance: planning for post-closure of JRL with the State responsible for its property in perpetuity.

I am somewhat confused by section 2, 4B. It appears to be a mandate for the State to work to site a new landfill as an alternative to JRL. This is long overdue, and at present there is no bureau, department or agency tasked with securing future landfill capacity. Regional landfills make a lot of sense to cut down on transportation costs. Landfill capacity in nearby states is dwindling, so there is increasing pressure for companies like Casella to bring their wastes to Maine. Tightening the laws on defining Maine waste is an essential element of a more just system of waste management.

I urge you to carefully consider the various parts of LD 1782 and vote Ought to Pass.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Spencer