

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

**Re: Opposition to LD 297: An Act Regarding the Management of Oversized Bulky Waste from Wastewater Treatment Plants**

This terrible “emergency” bill is designed to benefit Casella, not Maine. It is a giant step backward:

1. It puts private profit over public interest.
2. It dismantles the protections established in LD 1639 in order to allow thousands of tons of out-of-state waste to flood into Maine under deceptive definitions.
3. LD 1639 was enacted to ensure that Juniper Ridge was reserved for in-state waste, and closed loopholes in order to protect our only active, state-owned landfill. LD 297 undermines this progress in securing Maine’s limited landfill space.
4. LD 297 even makes this disruption in forward progress retroactive (making one wonder if Casella is exceeding established limits on out-of-state waste at Juniper Ridge Landfill), and would lock the state into bad policies for years into the future.

Two years ago, during Casella’s manufactured “sludge crisis,” the company fought for 235,000 tons of out-of-state waste annually from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. After legislators scrutinized the numbers, they settled on just 25,000 tons/year, exposing Casella’s attempt to flood Juniper Ridge with the region’s waste under the pretense of balancing sludge. LD 297 is another attempt to push far beyond what is needed.

Just over two months ago, on February 14, the Government Oversight Committee voted 10-1 to investigate Juniper Ridge’s management, raising issues such as:

1. How well Maine is eliminating out-of-state waste;
2. Whether Casella is adhering to the solid waste management hierarchy;
3. How the state can exercise more control over the landfill.

It would be entirely ill-advised to pass this bill before the committee’s investigation is complete.

LD 297 would further the history of environmental injustice perpetrated on the Penobscot tribe:

1. Indian Island, home of the Penobscot Nation, is located in the Penobscot River, just a few miles from Juniper Ridge.
2. The river, at the heart of the tribe’s culture and society, has been continuously poisoned by the landfill’s leachate, which contains high levels of PFAS (“forever chemicals”).
3. The tribe is already unduly burdened by proximity to more than half the state’s garbage.
4. LD 297 would worsen this unequal burden by enshrining in law not only the future opportunity, but a retroactive provision, to permit more out-of-state waste at Juniper Ridge.

I urge the committee to reject LD 297. Maine’s taxpayers should not be forced to bear the environmental and financial costs of handling other states’ trash, and Maine’s government should uphold its commitments to responsible waste management and environmental justice.

Leslie J. Hudson  
70 Forest Avenue  
Orono, ME 04473  
leshudson44@gmail.com