

Testimony for LD 1637

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Since the Midcoast Regional Restoration Authority (MRRA) was given control of the former Naval Air Station Brunswick (NASB) they have proved to be competent real estate developers but not very good neighbors. Their focus has been on profit while they ignored any input from the community about environmental concerns and views on how the base property should be utilized. Here are a few examples:

The AFFF spill on August 19, 2024 was the culmination of years of their tendency to ignore warnings from community members and Brunswick Area Citizens for a Safe Environment (BACSE), the community representative organization to the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) of the Navy. Once the Navy realized the dangers of AFFF and decided to remove all of the AFFF systems on their properties, they offered to remove and dispose of all the AFFF systems on the base property. MRRA refused this offer because they didn't want to have to pay to replace the AFFF systems with a newer and safer system. Then in 2023 when the systems in hangers 4 and 6 both failed their annual inspection, they lied about the results to the community and continued to have the systems active in the hangers. They ended up firing the new executive director of MRRA because they got caught.

Back in 2008 MRRA was required to conduct surveys and workshops to get input on how the community wanted to utilize the base property. Most responses received expressed concerns about the environmental hazards on the base and wanted any polluted sites to be cleaned up. In addition, responses stated that the airport should be closed down. MRRA just ignored these responses.

MRRA currently is proposing expanding the airport and adding a customs facility to make it more convenient for a few international flights to clear customs in Brunswick rather than having to go to Portland or Bangor. Current estimates are for a demand for only 145 operations (landings or take offs) per year that would utilize this facility. That's equivalent to an average of only three flights a week with three people per flight. It doesn't make sense when you consider that estimated cost to build the facility is around seven million dollars and a community survey that they conducted resulted in most of the responses were against the idea of the expansion.

Finally, Viridi Energy has purchased an existing anaerobic digester that was original used to convert garden waste into electric energy. Virid Energy wants to build a bigger anaerobic digester on the property that will be used to break down PFAS contaminated sludge into renewable natural gas (RNG) and reduce the volume of PFAS contaminated sludge by 90%. The resulting sludge will contain 100% of the PFAS and will be trucked to a landfill in Orono. The only problem is that there are two other plants currently approved and under construction in Maine and the state of Maine doesn't generate enough sludge to keep the two new plants and the Viridi Energy plant running full time and profitable. So Viridi Energy is planning to import PFAS contaminated sludge from other states and possibly other countries. When this was

presented to the community in a workshop on January 27, 2025 the response was a definite no but MRRA is still proceeding despite the input from the community.

I urge you to support LD1637 to give the community a voice in what MRRA does at Brunswick Landing.