



Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 2070; *“An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands”*

By  
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Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Mark Draper and I am the Solid Waste Director for Aroostook Waste Solutions (“AWS”). AWS is a not-for-profit corporation owned by the municipalities of Fort Fairfield, Limestone, Caribou, and Presque Isle, which owns two (2) landfills in Aroostook County. Those are the Tri-Community Landfill in Fort Fairfield, which is operational, and the Presque Isle Landfill in Presque Isle, which is not. AWS provides disposal capacity for over 70% of the Aroostook County population.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in opposition to L.D. 2070. This bill appears to be a direct attempt at preventing the expansion of the Juniper Ridge Landfill, but it unfortunately also collects all other landfill facilities in Maine as collateral damage. Facilities that provide the necessary capacity to dispose of the waste materials that society generates on a daily basis. Those include: municipal solid waste (i.e.; “trash”) from residents and businesses; demolition and construction waste from housing and other development; and sludge and residuals from wastewater treatment plants and other processes. Prohibiting expansion of an

existing landfill into a wetland does not remove the need for the disposal capacity, it simply requires that new landfill capacity be developed at a greenfield site.

Maine's stringent landfill siting standards typically drive landfill development towards areas that have tight, poorly-drained, deep soils – which also tend to be the characteristics for wetland areas. When proposed landfill development projects potentially impact wetland areas, Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act ("NRPA") comprehensive rules, regulations, and standards apply to prevent, avoid, minimize and/or mitigate those impacts. The NRPA regulations apply to any and all development - not just landfills, but this bill would essentially remove NRPA from the landfill expansion process, while still allowing virtually any other type of development that meets the applicable standards. So, where a landfill expansion would be prohibited, a parking lot could exist (for example). Either way, the wetland is impacted. The remaining choice is simply for what purpose.

While nobody really wants landfill expansion, the fact remains that it is a fundamental and necessary component of the solid waste management system upon which civilized society is established.

For these reasons, I urge you to please vote "ought not to pass" on L.D. 2070. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.