

Maulian Bryant
Wabanaki Alliance
LD 2070

Wabanaki Alliance Testimony In Support of LD 2070

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Maulian Bryant, I am a Penobscot Nation Tribal Citizen and Executive Director of the Wabanaki Alliance. Our organization was established by tribal leaders from all of the Wabanaki Nations in our homelands now called Maine to promote education and advocacy on issues affecting our people, sovereignty, and future.

We are in strong support of LD 2070: An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands. We thank Representative Dill for bringing this important bill forward.

The Wabanaki Alliance is supportive of the Penobscot Nation and the many organizations in their objections to the proposed expansion of the Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town. This state-owned landfill has been the topic of many pieces of legislation in this committee and part of the constant discourse is the efforts of the Penobscot Nation who seek to protect the health and welfare of the people, the air, the waters, and wildlife in tribal territory (both currently recognized territory and historic).

The landfill is a clear and present example of environmental injustice; it sits adjacent to Penobscot Nation's primary community, filling the air and water with pollution and toxicity. Before any expansion is deliberated there should be adequate consultation with and consideration for the Penobscot Nation. Thanks to legislative efforts such as this one and the diligence of the tribe and partners to push back on the Department of Environmental Protection and Casella Waste Management Systems there has been progress.

It is a refrain often heard in tribal communities that "water is life." You can hear this spoken across the country in different tribal languages whether it is taking a stand against drilling and pipelines, removal of dams, cleaning up drinking water; or protecting rivers, lakes, oceans, and streams from harmful pollutants. We add our voices here to this chorus of Indigenous wisdom and stewardship. We support a slow and deliberate approach to proposals that seek to further damage the environment without properly accounting for all the consequences now and for the next generations.