

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 2027

An Act to Clarify the Property Tax Exemption for Air Pollution Control Facilities

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Sen. Grohowski, Rep. Perry, and members of the Joint Committee on Taxation, I am Carla Dickstein, a resident of Wiscasset since 1992. I'm here in support of LD 2027.

This bill would reverse the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's decision to certify the main components of Maine Yankee's Independent Spent Fuel Storage Facility (ISFSI) at the former nuclear plant site in Wiscasset as a "pollution control facility" that is exempted from local real estate taxation. These components include 64 stainless steel canisters, 64 concrete casks that stand on 17 feet high concrete pads that store spent nuclear fuels and greater than class C nuclear waste, protected by round the clock armed security guards.

The purpose of the facility is to secure storage of highly dangerous materials in a ready-to-transport state pending ultimate removal by the U.S. government, whenever that might take place. It was supposed to be "temporary" storage, but the federal government has never provided a permanent storage facility. During this limbo of temporary storage, the U.S. Department of Energy is legally required to reimburse Maine Yankee for all reasonable costs incurred including real estate taxes.

This is not a pollution control facility. There's no industrial process in the facility. I understand that Maine Yankee argued that the storage canisters prevented any escape of "radionuclide" particles and should be considered "primarily for air pollution control." DEP accepted this argument and classified the canisters, casks and pads as an "air pollution control facility" exempt from real estate taxation, removing more than \$93 million from the tax rolls of Wiscasset.

No other state exempts ISFSI facilities from real estate taxation as pollution control facilities. Other Yankees in Massachusetts and Connecticut are taxed at full assessable value. Maine Yankee needs to pay its fair share of taxes to Wiscasset.

Wiscasset incurs costs in hosting the facility. It requires continuous fire and police protection as well as road plowing and maintenance. And the presence of the facility is a negative factor for encouraging nearby development.

In summary, this bill would clarify what an air pollution control facility is, and it does not include a facility that stores spent nuclear waste. Maine Yankee does not qualify.

I urge the committee to vote "ought to pass." Thank you for the opportunity to testify.