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April 10, 2025

Honorable Margaret Rotundo, Chair
Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: **Testimony In Support of LD 25 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund Wastewater Treatment Facility Planning and Construction of Infrastructure Projects**

Dear Senator Rotundo, Senator Bernard, and Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee:

The Maine Water Environment Association (MeWEA) is a non-profit, all volunteer association of over 650 members. MeWEA represents a diverse group of water quality professionals throughout Maine including wastewater treatment plant operators, sewer collection system operators, utility system administrators, consulting engineers, suppliers, contractors, public works officials, stormwater system operators, and regulatory officials. The mission of MeWEA is to support and enhance Maine's water environment community through promoting training opportunities; supporting balanced environmental policy and practice; promoting education and collaboration with the public to protect and enhance Maine's water resources.

Discussion. Demonstrating leadership on public health, Maine responded to PFAS contamination concerns in 2021, electing to ban beneficial reuse of biosolids. While MeWEA understands the need for such action, the ban of beneficial reuse has forced these materials to landfills that have significantly limited capacity and operational challenges associated with managing such wet waste. Recognizing these unintended consequences, Maine DEP funded an independent study in 2023 by Brown & Caldwell, which examines these challenges, and recommends investing in biosolids volume reduction and management projects such as improved dewatering, digestion and drying.

Following the recommendations of the Brown & Caldwell study, passing LD25 would be an opportunity to continue a leadership position by activating a funding mechanism for Maine's public utilities. This bill would provide grant funding to address the looming crisis in an industry that already has over \$1.7B of additional identified infrastructure needs. The current biosolids need is greater than what LD25 offers but is an essential step in the right direction.

If approved, LD 25 will assist clean water utility districts and municipal clean water facilities to fund infrastructure projects to manage biosolids, minimize impacts to Maine's landfills, and facilitate research and technology to define alternative approaches to biosolids volume reduction.

If LD 25 does not pass, Maine's extremely limited landfill space will fill up much faster and options for biosolids disposal will be extremely limited.

Sincerely,

Theresa L Tucker

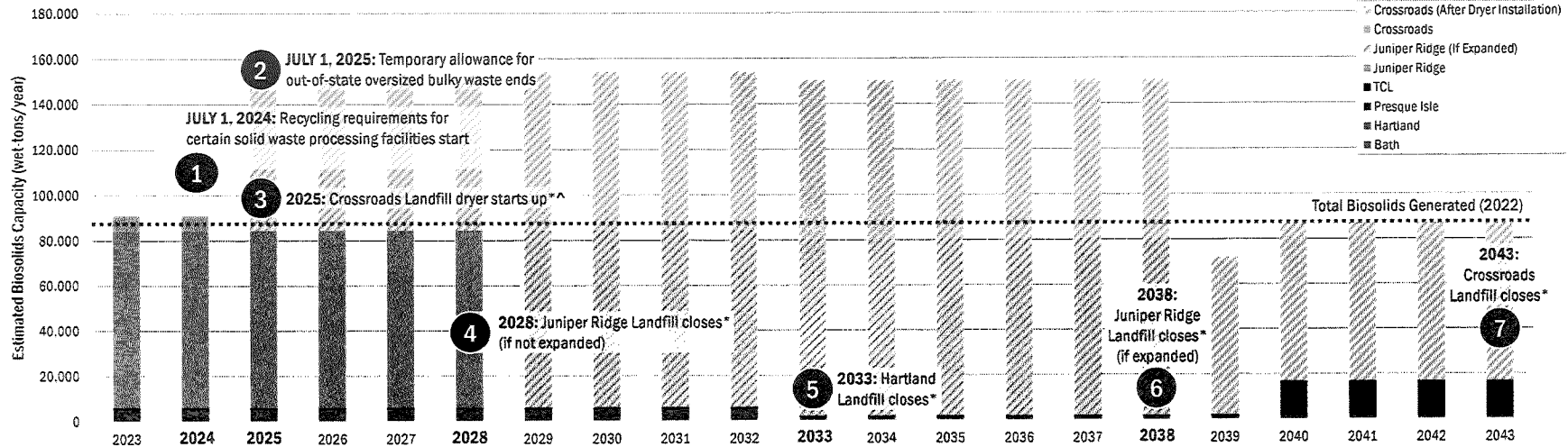
Theresa Tucker, President

An Overview of the Uncertain Future for Biosolids Management in Maine

To illustrate the urgency to implement effective solutions, the figure below shows the projected capacity to manage biosolids in Maine in the coming years—compared with the amount of biosolids generated in 2022 (horizontal dotted line)—and key events impacting that capacity.

Maine is facing a biosolids management challenge with too much biosolids and too few outlets.

The next two years present complications with bulking agent availability, which could limit the use of in-state landfills for biosolids. Looking towards the next twenty years, landfill closures will severely reduce outlets for biosolids. The challenge ahead is implementing a sustainable and functioning solution to manage biosolids while continuing to protect the environment.



1	2	3	4	5	6	7
July 1, 2024	July 1, 2025	2025	2028	2033	2038	2043
Recycling requirements for certain solid waste processing facilities start	Temporary allowance for out-of-state oversized bulky waste ends	Crossroads Landfill dryer starts up**	Juniper Ridge Landfill closes* (if not expanded)	Hartland Landfill closes*	Juniper Ridge Landfill closes* (if expanded)	Crossroads Landfill closes*
IMPACT + SIGNIFICANCE: With this requirement, solids processing facilities will have to recycle more of the waste they receive through methods other than use as a bulking agent or alternative daily cover at a landfill—potentially decreasing the amount of material available to mix with biosolids at landfills.	IMPACT + SIGNIFICANCE: When the temporary measure allowing oversized bulky waste derived from waste generated out of state to be placed in a state-owned landfill ends, there may be a further shortage of bulking agents to mix with biosolids. Similar to spring 2023, this could result in increased costs to POTWs if biosolids must be sent out of the state.	IMPACT + SIGNIFICANCE: After drying, biosolids can be introduced to the landfill without the need for bulking agents. When this dryer is fully operational, it will increase the capacity of the Crossroads Landfill for biosolids.	IMPACT + SIGNIFICANCE: The current permitted capacity of JRL is estimated to be used by 2028. If it isn't expanded, there will be no Maine landfill with enough capacity to meet solid waste needs and much of the biosolids produced will need to be sent out of state at greatly increased cost for utilities and ratepayers.	IMPACT + SIGNIFICANCE: When Hartland Landfill closes, the biosolids currently disposed there (historically about 5% of the biosolids generated annually) will need to be diverted to an alternate site.	IMPACT + SIGNIFICANCE: Even if expanded, JRL is estimated to use all available capacity by 2038. When JRL closes, Maine's available landfill capacity for biosolids (and solid waste generally) will be severely curtailed. Most biosolids would need to be managed in other states or provinces at greatly increased cost.	IMPACT + SIGNIFICANCE: Under current regulations, when the Crossroads Landfill uses its remaining permitted capacity, there will be nearly no outlets for biosolids—dried or not—in Maine.

*Estimated dates

**While other biosolids facilities have been proposed in Maine, including those discussed in Section 3.2, this is the only facility for which permit applications have been formally submitted to DEP and so is the only one included in this graphic.

