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DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES
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SERVING THE PUBLIC AND DELIVERING ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO STATE GOVERNMENT

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*Testimony of Anya Trundy, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Administrative and Financial Services
Testifying in Support of*

LD 297, An Act Regarding the Management of Oversized Bulky Waste from Wastewater Treatment Plants

Sponsored by Rep. William Bridgeo
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; I am Anya Trundy, a Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) and I am here today to testify in Support of this bill on behalf of the Bureau of General Services (BGS).

This bill will extend the sunset date of PL 2023, c. 283 from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2028, continuing to allow "out of state" bulky waste processed with in-state waste at ReSource in Lewiston, to be accepted by the state-owned Juniper Ridge Landfill (JRL) until then, and providing much needed additional time for alternative solid waste solutions currently in the works to come online.

In 2023, amendment of 38 MRS §1303-C prohibited deposits of out-of-state waste, including out-of-state waste mixed with in-state waste, at state-owned landfills. At the time, out-of-state construction demolition debris (CDD) was processed with in-state debris at ReSource in Lewiston and the resulting processing residues were used to stabilize sludge at JRL.

JRL is the only operating, state-owned landfill in Maine. Dolby does not accept waste and is being capped, as it is an unlined legacy landfill. And Carpenter Ridge is not, and is not planned to be, developed. JRL accepts 81.4% of the 85,000 tons of sludge generated by the state's many wastewater treatment plants. Sludge is 90% water and must be mixed with solids at a ratio of 1:4, otherwise the carefully engineered landfill cells would become structurally unstable and collapse. CDD is the most abundant source of bulking material.

In 2023, the volume of biosolids transported to JRL increased as a result of PL 2021, c. 626 banning the land application of sludge. Given the prohibition on accepting out-of-state waste, the volume of bulky waste was insufficient to match the spike in sludge, requiring JRL to limit the amount of sludge it could accept, and causing a crisis for municipal wastewater treatment plants

across the state that now had no outlet for disposal of their biosolids. In response, the Legislature extended the time during which out-of-state waste could be accepted at JRL through July 1, 2025.

Until new technologies, such as anaerobic digestion and sludge drying, aimed at reducing the water volume of biosolids are operational, JRL will need bulky waste to mix with sludge, and more bulky waste than is generated by in-state sources to match the volume of sludge generated in Maine. Emergency passage of LD 297 will buy the industry three more years (through July 1, 2028) to advance these technologies and for proposed facilities to come online, thus reducing the demand for bulking material.

If LD 297 fails to gain emergency passage, again constraining JRL's available supply of bulking material, JRL would either have to 1) replace the processing residues with alternative materials such as clean wood and gravel or soil rather than existing waste material, with accompanying environmental impacts and increased disposal costs for JRL customers, or 2) change in the geometry of landfill cells in such a way that would reduce the capacity of the licensed footprint, and JRL's licensed capacity will be exhausted in 2028 even under current conditions. Although it is possible that sludge could be transported to other states (if they accept the material) or to Canada, it would be at great expense to local wastewater treatment plant customers.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I am happy to answer questions from the Committee.