



CITY OF BANGOR

Committee on Environmental and Natural Resources

Testimony in Support of LD 297– “An Act Regarding the Management of Oversized Bulky Waste from Wastewater Treatment Plants”

May 5, 2023

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Amanda Smith, Director of Water Quality Management for the City of Bangor, and I’m providing testimony on behalf of the City in support of LD 297, “An Act Regarding the Management of Oversized Bulky Waste from Wastewater Treatment Plants.”

We urge the Committee to support LD 297. In 2023, the biosolids disposal crisis reached a critical level, in part, due to the sudden reduction in the amount of bulking materials that landfills need to mix with biosolids. Legislative changes have made landfiling the sole option for wastewater treatment facilities to manage biosolids. It is crucial to ensure the reliable disposal of biosolids in landfills by maintaining a consistent supply of bulking agents.

A joint study by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and Maine Water Environment Association (An Evaluation of Biosolids Management in Maine and Recommendations for the Future, by Brown and Caldwell, December 15, 2023) revealed that the underlying challenge lies in managing solid-waste effectively and the path forward will be slow. The study’s recommendations are long-term and will need to be thoughtfully navigated to maintain a delicate balance between a variety of stakeholders.

Bangor, like the rest of the state, still faces an uncertain future for biosolids disposal. Passage of LD 297 will provide essential time for the State to continue their work on refining state-owned landfill operations and exploring alternative disposal options. Meanwhile, the City has been actively engaged with the Department of Environmental Protection and environmental organizations throughout the nation to identify solutions for biosolids management.

The City of Bangor, like all Maine communities, depends upon wastewater treatment to protect human health and safeguard the environment. Passage of LD 297 is a vital step to ensure that biosolids management will remain uninterrupted through this challenging phase.

Bangor remains committed to making our staff and resources available to participate in the development and implementation of long-term, sustainable solutions that will benefit both the people and waters of our great state.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Cara Pelletier, Council Chair cara.pelletier@bangormaine.gov

Debbie Laurie, City Manager debbie.laurie@bangormaine.gov

Amanda Smith, Director of Water Quality Management amanda.smith@bangormaine.gov