



Mike Tipping
Senator, District 8

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

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

My name is Mike Tipping. I represent Senate District 8 in Penobscot County and I'm proud to present **LD 1349, An Act to Require Legislative Approval for a Contract to Operate the Juniper Ridge Landfill** as well as a proposed amendment.

This bill arises from both local concerns about the process of contracting for and expansion of the Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town and Alton, as well as a review of state contracting and procurement procedures I've been part of serving on the Government Oversight Committee.

The contract for this landfill was originally orchestrated outside of the normal procurement process, with a special act of the legislature proposed by Governor Baldacci in 2003 allowing the State Planning Office to buy and contract for the site without additional oversight.

LD 1349 would make sure that we do things better next time - ensuring that before any other decisions are made about this major state-owned facility, the legislature and through them the people of Maine would have a say.

Local residents have raised a wide range of issues about Juniper Ridge, from fires and odors to groundwater contamination with forever chemicals. These are serious concerns with significant public health and safety considerations and they deserve public scrutiny and input.

There are also concerns about the way this landfill interacts with local municipalities and the nearby Penobscot Nation, how much waste is being disposed of and where it's coming from, and how the operation of the landfill fits within Maine's larger environmental goals and the priorities of the legislature.

Many municipalities that currently pay tipping fees for waste transfer to Juniper Ridge obviously have their own interests and concerns.

This bill would allow for a process where these concerns are addressed before any contract is renewed or future operator is approved. Legislators will be able to ask questions and get answers in a public venue and it will create a visible process for approval, rather than one that takes place behind closed doors. We could put guarantees and protections into place that would head off the need for later legislation like many of the bills that are being considered today.

We can do better than we did 22 years ago and make sure the decisions made about this site and the future of Maine's solid waste disposal practices are made in public and prioritize the needs and best interests of all Mainers, not just private gain.

I appreciate your consideration and I'm happy to answer any questions.