

Testimony of Ashley Luszczycki
In Opposition to L.D. 1349, An Act to Require Legislative Approval for a Contract to
Operate the Juniper Ridge Landfill
Before the Environment and Natural Resource Committee
April 28, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resource, my name is Ashley Luszczycki. I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing a network of 5,000+ small to large businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to L.D. 1349, An Act to Require Legislative Approval for a Contract to Operate the Juniper Ridge Landfill.

Our mission is to promote a positive business climate and advance policies that foster long-term economic growth in Maine. Proposals like L.D. 1349 inject risk into our business climate by adding a new layer of uncertainty to the regulatory process. This kind of unpredictability is precisely what deters businesses from investing or partnering with the state on critical infrastructure needs. Regardless of the issue, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce would strongly oppose contract approvals by the Legislature.

The process for awarding a contract to operate the state-owned Juniper Ridge Landfill is and should remain a function of the appropriate executive branch agencies, specifically the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS), in coordination with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). These agencies have technical expertise, regulatory responsibility, and public accountability to ensure that contracts align with Maine's environmental standards, operational needs, and long-term waste management goals.

Again, the Chamber believes that subjecting contracts – whether for approval or renewal - to legislative approval risks politicizing what should be a data-driven, regulatory decision-making process. We believe it would set a precedent where routine procurement agreements could be delayed or affected by other legislative debates. This creates uncertainty for businesses, undermines the integrity of the procurement process, and could ultimately drive away experienced, qualified operators.

State-owned assets must be managed with public interest at the forefront, and we believe the current, multi-step process provides appropriate oversight and public engagement. L.D. 1349 would signal to current and prospective business partners that the State of Maine is an unpredictable place to do business. At a time when Maine is working hard to attract private investment and modernize its infrastructure, this bill could negatively impact partnerships and procurements.

The Chamber believes that by adding legislative approval of contracts to the process, it will add delay, uncertainty, and risk – rather than delivering new protections for the public or the environment. We appreciate your consideration and urge you to oppose L.D. 1349.