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Testimony of Rep. James Dill

L.D. 1782 “An Act Regarding Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Planning and the Juniper Ridge Landfill in the City of Old Town” *Before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee*

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and distinguished members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Jim Dill, and I represent House District 26 and the communities of Bradley, Old Town and Penobscot Nation Voting District. I am here before you today to present **L.D. 1782 “An Act Regarding Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Planning and the Juniper Ridge Landfill in the City of Old Town”**

It's a nice summer day with a slight breeze and I'm sitting in my back yard with my wife sipping a nice cold lemonade. When she says, what is that odor? Did a squirrel die in the hedge? Nope, it's not a dead squirrel but the Juniper Ridge Landfill (JRL). You get the image. Now in fairness to the operators of Juniper Ridge, this doesn't happen often in my part of Old Town, but it does happen. They do a pretty good job of quelling odors. However, the seagulls flying overhead and bombarding me is a different story. I just hope they miss my lemonade!

You all aren't fortunate enough to have a State-owned landfill in your town with all the externalities with which we deal - odor, seagulls, sludge in the landfill which may some day leak PFAS and who knows what else into the Penobscot River, the “new hills of Old Town”, etc. This bill was put in mostly concerning JRL, but there are many components of it that refers to other State-owned landfills also. Another issue with JRL is that it was supposed to last at least 8 more years before expansion would be needed. Because the unrecycled waste of 159 municipalities has been diverted here, it will be at capacity in less than 4 years.

This bill hopes to do several things concerning solid waste management. First, if you are a host municipality of a state-owned landfill, the residents should not have

to pay for trash disposal because of the issues already mentioned. In Old Town, we have 2 large trash barrels on wheels supplied to us by the operator of JRL. In one you can just throw all your recyclables, which is convenient. The other is for trash. In this barrel you must place your trash in special bags, sold locally at either \$1.75 or \$2.50 each. The quality control on these bags is terrible. This was one of the biggest complaints I heard last year when I was knocking on doors.

Another is a fee of not less than \$5.00 per ton of waste coming to the JRL or other state-owned landfill, split equally between the host town and the local school unit. This fee is basically to reimburse the town of having to accept the 159 communities' waste (or whatever the landfill in other places) that have been diverted here, unrecycled. It is also an incentive for the towns to reduce their landfill materials by perhaps 75%, by recycling. Plus, DEP can also add a surcharge to solid waste again if the municipality is not reaching recycling goals.

A third section states, the DEP and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, shall jointly develop a comprehensive solid waste management plan for a state-owned or state-operated landfill. In creating a plan, the department and bureau shall consult with owners and operators of public and private solid waste management facilities and municipalities and quasi-municipal entities involved with the state-owned or state-operated landfill.

The Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services, and the Department of Environmental Protection, shall jointly develop a comprehensive solid waste management plan for the Juniper Ridge Landfill in the City of Old Town, including options after closure. The department and the bureau shall consult with the Old Town City Council and Landfill Advisory Board; the Penobscot Nation's Tribal Council or representatives; owners and operators of public and private solid waste management facilities; and municipalities and quasi-municipal entities, including any other communities hosting state landfills and representatives for the approximately 159 municipalities formerly or currently served by Municipal Review Committee, Inc. or the former Penobscot Energy Recovery Company.

There may be other people behind me who will be better able to answer questions. I will try to answer questions, if there are any. Thanks