

TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM MAYO
before the
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Regarding LD 1782, "An Act Regarding Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Planning and the
Juniper Ridge Landfill in the City of Old Town."
April 28, 2025

Senate Chair Tepler, House Chair Doudera and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is William Mayo, and I am the City Manager for the City of Old Town, Maine. I am speaking in favor of LD 1782.

Old Town is the host community for Juniper Ridge Landfill (JRL), the State-owned, privately operated landfill. JRL began as the Fort James Corporation's landfill (the West Old Town Landfill) and was acquired by the State in 2003 in an economic development effort to keep the paper company in operation. After the paper company closed, the State indirectly acquired a permitted and operating landfill – something it had been unable to do directly through years of funding and staffing the Maine Waste Management Agency, which was unable to site, permit, and construct an operating landfill anywhere in Maine.

Under State ownership and operation (by Casella Waste Systems, Inc. ("Casella") under a 30-year agreement with the State, from 2004 through 2034), JRL commenced operation as a Construction and Demolition Debris landfill that would take limited amounts of by-pass and incinerator ash, but not unprocessed MSW, from PERC and limited amounts of sludge from wastewater treatment plant facilities.

However, JRL now accepts unprocessed MSW from the several municipalities contracting with the currently closed Hampden Maine Waste Solutions, LLC (MWS) facility (closed since May 2020) and from the PERC municipalities (closed since May 2023). In addition, public wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) sludge from across the State is being disposed of at JRL because PFAS and PFOS contamination of that sludge precludes its land spreading and limits disposal options.

This means increased truck hauling of MSW and sludge through Old Town, increased amounts of disposal of unprocessed MSW and of WWTP sludge at JRL, increased rates of filling of JRL, and now, a need for a second expansion of JRL. This was not the understanding between the State and Old Town back in 2003 and 2004.

Given this history, Old Town supports LD 1782 because it addresses many of the City's criticisms of and concerns with the State's operation and oversight of JRL.

- Sec. 1 of LD 1782 establishes a base host fee of no less than \$5.00 per ton, annually adjusted for inflation, for all Acceptable Waste disposed of at JRL; half of this host fee is to offset the City's costs and burdens, and half is for the school unit. This helps to compensate the City more fairly for the burden of being the host community for what has now become the State's principal MSW landfill.

- Sec. 2 of LD 1782 directs MDEP and BGS to jointly develop a comprehensive solid waste management plan for a State-owned or operated landfill, something Old Town has sought for years, as an alternative to the reactive approach that has resulted in JRL becoming the State's principal MSW landfill by default.
- Consistent with Old Town's requests to this Legislature in recent years, Sec. 2 of LD 1782 requires this plan to:
 1. identify short and long-term MSW disposal options for municipalities using JRL;
 2. ensure that use of JRL is consistent with the State's solid waste hierarchy (38 MRS § 2101), which makes landfill disposal the least desirable form of solid waste disposal;
 3. propose legislative or regulatory changes needed to preserve landfill capacity, mitigate host community burdens on Old Town and improve statewide recycling and composting rates; and
 4. include options of post-closure (for at least 20 years) host-community compensation.

Old Town applauds the steps this bill takes in addressing the concerns it has frequently brought to this Legislature in recent years regarding JRL and Old Town's role as host community. While Old Town would favor a more comprehensive solid waste management plan that considers, coordinates, and addresses all solid waste facilities – public and private -- that handle MSW in Maine, this an important first step forward in solid waste management planning.

For these reasons, the City of Old Town asks this Committee to vote that LD 1782 "Ought to Pass."