

LD 2070
An Act to Prohibit Landfill Expansion into Wetlands

Sappi North America, Inc. - Somerset Mill
Written Testimony
Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
February 11, 2026 Public Hearing

Senator Teplar and Representative Doudera, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Ross Nason, a Senior Environmental Engineer of the Sappi Somerset Mill in Skowhegan and Fairfield, writing in opposition to LD 2070.

When I first reviewed the proposed language of LD 2070, I was surprised and concerned that the proposed language overrides existing MEDEP regulations governing wetland impacts and mitigation. Rules, I might add, that have undergone extensive and comprehensive review, deliberation, and public comment through the MEDEP's rulemaking process. We live in Maine, and there are a great deal of wetlands (some say as much as 25 - 30% of the state's land area). While wetland impacts are inevitable in many land development activities, existing regulations are thorough and protective. I believe that this bill will create a future solid waste crisis for the state by limiting landfill expansions. For example, Sappi's Somerset Mill is currently evaluating a potential landfill expansion project, using the state's current wetland rules governing impacts and mitigation. The proposed language would severely constrain Sappi's options and limit our ability to make necessary expansions.

Sappi views the Somerset Mill's landfill as an integral process of our overall papermaking process, by providing environmentally safe, secure, and cost-effective way of disposing of manufacturing residual waste (mostly sludge and boiler ash) from the papermaking process. The Somerset Mill is located on 2,500 acres along the banks of the Kennebec River in Skowhegan, Maine. Originally built in 1976 to manufacture and supply pulp, it is now home to three state-of-the-art paper machines that manufacture premium paper and paperboard for packaging, labels, and graphic papers. The Somerset Mill is the most technically advanced paper mill in North America, and Sappi has invested over \$1 billion in the Mill since 2012, \$500 million of which was invested in the past two years. The Mill directly employs roughly 780 people from many of the surrounding communities, contributing millions of dollars to the local economy. In addition, for every job at the Somerset Mill there are approximately eight jobs that Sappi supports both locally and around the state.

Operating a landfill is integral to the Mill's operation – and we view it as a crucial and necessary part of the Mill's core infrastructure.

In summary, LD 2070 could eventually create a solid waste crisis for Maine. The bill would override existing wetland rules, and potentially create economic hardships for operators of landfills, including Sappi's Somerset Mill.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to vote "Ought Not to Pass."

I am happy to answer any questions and will be available to participate in any future work sessions.