



Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Testimony of Shelby Wright, Eastern Region Manager of Engagement, Casella

May 3, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Shelby Wright and I am the Eastern Region Manager of Engagement for Casella.

Thank you for the opportunity to address LD 1532 “An Act to Protect Maine’s Air Quality by Strengthening Requirements for Air Emissions Licensing.”

At Casella, our mission is to protect the environment, strengthen our local communities, and grow our business by creating value from society’s waste streams. As the handler of almost 2/3 of Maine’s waste, our ability to grow and enhance our commitment to Maine’s residents and businesses hinges closely on the regulatory processes within the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Casella opposes LD 1532 because its proposals are unnecessary and overly burdensome.

LD 1532 proposes to unduly burden current license holders by requiring air emissions licenses to be renewed every three years, as opposed to the current five.

The air emissions licensure process is important, and it is appropriate that the state review a licensee’s status from time to time. However, changing from a five to a three year renewal schedule will be cumbersome to both the licensee and the DEP, requiring both to expend substantially more resources with no clear benefit.

Additionally, this bill would expand the application requirements for new licenses and renewals by requiring a plan “that outlines steps that will be taken by the applicant to protect the public health of the community.” An applicant is already required to meet applicable emissions standards which are standards for the protection of public health.

Further, it is not clear what is intended by this “plan,” and the lack of clear standards to define what would constitute an acceptable plan would create a vague, seemingly unnecessary, additional hurdle for licensees and the DEP.

Finally, LD 1532 would significantly increase the burden of obtaining and renewing permits by requiring a public hearing in the municipality where the source is located, including requiring public notice to anyone within 5 miles of the source.

The DEP’s rules already provide a public notice requirement telling the public that it will consider holding a public hearing, if one is requested. Further, a public hearing is a formal process that requires set deadlines, sworn testimony, and other technical procedures. This will add additional time and delay to the permitting and renewal process for all parties, while providing again, no clear benefit.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. We urge an ought not to pass vote from the committee.

We welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you may have and can be available for the work session.