Stop Filling Maine's Landfills with Out-of-State Waste

Support: LD 1639

An Act to Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste

Sponsored by: Sen. Anne Carney of Cumberland

Co-sponsored by: Sen. Bennett of Oxford, Sen. Brenner of Cumberland, Rep. Collings of Portland, Rep. Doudera of Camden, Speaker Fecteau of Biddeford, Rep. Grohoski of Ellsworth, President Jackson of Aroostook, Rep. Newell of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Rep. Williams of Bar Harbor

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Natural Resources Council of Maine

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A legal loophole currently allows the dumping of tons of toxic out-of-state waste in the State-owned Juniper Ridge Landfill (JRL) in Old Town. This is harming the health of Maine people and our environment.

Because of this loophole, private companies are filling JRL with massive amounts of toxic waste, which is threatening sites of historical, cultural, and spiritual significance for the Penobscot Nation, neighboring residents, and the Penobscot River and Bay.

LD 1639 Would Close the Loophole and Stop Maine from Being a Dumping Ground for Toxic Waste

The bill would:

- Limit the tonnage that a Maine waste processing facility can send to JRL to be no more than what they take from original Maine sources; **out-of-state waste tons would no longer be able to be disguised as Maine-generated tons.**

- Clarify that **landfilling is not recycling**, and no placement of waste in a landfill counts toward the 50% recycling standard that a solid waste processing facility must meet.

- Require Maine's solid waste processing facilities that process a majority of out-of-state waste to innovate and do the right thing for our environment by recycling more of the material they receive, or **by processing more waste originally generated by Maine people than they import from out of state.**

"Unfortunately, Maine has allowed hundreds of thousands of tons of out-of-state waste to be landfilled in our state...it's time to correct this massive injustice."
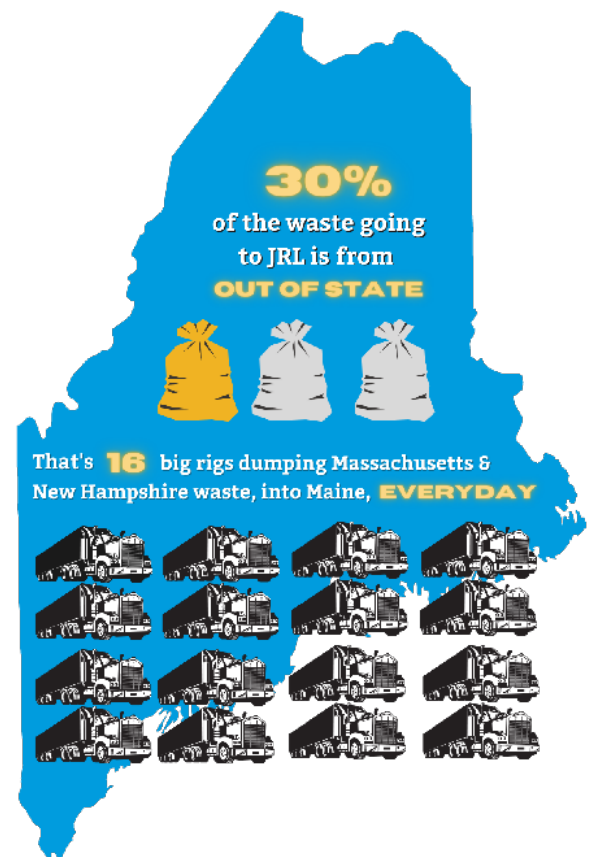
– John Banks, Natural Resources Director, Penobscot Nation

While Maine cannot legally restrict _commercial_ waste facilities from importing out-of-state waste because of Federal law, we _can_ prevent out-of-state waste from being dumped in our _State-owned_ waste facilities.

Current Maine law classifies waste as "generated within the state" just by virtue of going to one of Maine's solid waste processing facilities before it is landfilled. **LD 1639 would stop that.**

Did You Know?

- At least 30% of the waste landfilled at JRL each year is toxic construction and demolition debris (CDD) that originated out-of-state. In 2019, that was 235,396 tons, or the equivalent of sixteen forty-ton big rigs dumping waste into JRL every single day of the year.

- The amount of waste going to JRL has increased by 32% since 2012. The 2017 disposal amounts were 40% higher than the maximum amounts anticipated in 2004 and shows no sign of slowing down without legislative action.

- The majority of the CDD waste comes to Maine from Massachusetts, where they have banned disposal of CDD waste in their landfills. Until we strengthen our laws, too, Maine will continue to legally but unjustly be a dumping ground for other states.

- Between 2011-2019, one of Maine's solid waste processing facilities, on average, received 89% of their waste from out of state, while only 11% was in-state waste. What's worse is that the processing only prevented 9% of all of the waste, both in-state and out-of-state, from going to landfill. That means 91% of what the facility takes in ends up in Juniper Ridge Landfill!

30%
of the waste going to JRL is from **OUT OF STATE**

That's **16** big rigs dumping Massachusetts & New Hampshire waste, into Maine, **EVERYDAY**

This bill, LD 1639, is being driven by Don't Waste ME, a coalition of impacted community members and tribal citizens fighting for policies that protect the health of communities most at risk from the negative impacts of waste facilities, and is also supported by Community Action Works and the Maine Environmental Priorities Coalition.

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