

Kelly Merrill
Skowhegan

Dear Chairs and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Kelly Merrill and I'm a resident of Skowhegan, Maine, a climate activist, and community organizer.

I grew up in Southern Wabanakeag (now known as Maine) and returned here with my son for the reasons so many flock to the state. The natural resources that we enjoy, the clean air and water are very important to me as a person disabled by chemical sensitivities.

I fully support LD 1639 - An Act To Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste, and urge you to pass as amended.

The landfill at Juniper Ridge is desecrating the Penobscot River, the water upon which we rely on for life itself. The project dumps leachate, containing a toxic stew of chemicals that cannot even be identified by the plant, "processing" it, which consists of diluting the leachate and dumping it directly into the river. What a tragically puerile notion that diluting the chemicals somehow make them better for the water or for us.

Moreover, the trash that produces the leachate is coming in from other states, which have protections in place for the environment, such that they can't dump hazardous waste into their rivers. Why should Maine pollute our mother for such greed?

We urge you to pass this bill to provide much needed protections for the environment, the river, and all life who rely upon it.

In solidarity with the Penobscot,

Kelly Merrill
(they/them)
Skowhegan