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Sen. Brenner, Rep. Tucker, and members of the ENR committee:

PSR Maine is an organization of health practitioners and public health advocates with over 2000 supporters throughout the state. I am currently an officer of the organization, and am writing in support of LD 1639. The bill removes a loophole from previous legislative actions which, though designed to limit the local dumping of out-of-state materials in public landfills, allowed “reprocessed” waste to be stored here.

If you go to the Juniper Ridge website, the first paragraph you see reads: *“The Juniper Ridge Landfill is owned by the State of Maine and is part of the solid waste disposal system within the state that provides for Maine’s solid waste disposal needs. Juniper Ridge Landfill accepts residues from waste-to-energy facilities, construction/demolition debris and other wastes **generated within the State.**”* It is somewhat shocking to find that this is not true.

From a public health perspective, having an environmentally sound facility for waste disposal is critically important to protect surrounding communities from the heavy metals, plastic residues, and complex toxic chemicals that landfills inherently store. Because of the addition of out of state materials, the JRL facility is filling up faster than originally anticipated, which is not in the interest of our citizens.

As a pediatrician, my focus is on prevention of illness in children. Causes of long-term developmental disabilities are complex, but over the last decades there has been increasing concern regarding the interaction between chemical exposure and genetics in the observed increased prevalence of these disabilities, including autism (**PEDIATRICS** 149 #1 Jan 2022). Other research has shown associations between exposures and common medical conditions, such as obesity and asthma, and some birth defects. Thus, reversing the environmental errors our society made over the last decades regarding toxic exposures has profound implications for the functioning of future generations.

Thank you for seriously considering passage of LD 1639.

Sincerely,

Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH
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