



Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Presentation in Opposition of LD 1639 An Act To Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste

By Shelby Wright, Eastern Region Manager of Engagement, Casella Waste Systems, Inc.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to renew our opposition to LD 1639 “An Act To Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste.”

Senator Carney recently provided her new amendment to us and we greatly appreciate that. We have not yet had an opportunity to fully review the amendment so our comments are focused on the solid waste challenges this bill, as drafted, would present.

First, the State-owned landfill does not accept “out of state waste” and is prohibited from doing so by law.

Critics of the solid waste management industry have focused on the current statutory definition of “waste generated within the state.” They claim this is a “loophole.” In fact, the existing statute is a lifeline. It allows Maine’s solid waste and recycling industry to serve residents and businesses of the state by maintaining a robust and affordable option for recycling and solid waste processing.

The current definition of “waste generated in the state” was codified in 2006. It reaffirmed a long-held practice of Maine’s approach to solid waste management that recognized the residuals of a Maine processing facility as “in-state waste” for purposes of disposal, no matter the origins of the material being processed.

This long held understanding is evidenced by the fact that no one from Bureau of General Services or from the Maine DEP claims that the State-owned landfill accepts out of state waste. Again, the State-owned landfill does not accept “out of state waste” and is prohibited from doing so by law.

Also, Maine cannot act as a solo operator in the regional waste space. We are not at all self-sufficient when it comes to handling our own waste. All the medical waste generated in Maine, all of the hazardous waste generated in Maine, all of our E-waste, and other special wastes generated in Maine are disposed of in another state.

On a broader scope, the practice of recognizing residuals as in-state waste was the underlying factor that led to the development of Maine’s current waste processing capacity. Without the practical

recognition that residuals from Maine processing facilities were in-state waste, our residents would still be landfilling 100% of our waste unprocessed.

And speaking of unprocessed waste...

To focus only on CDD waste that comes from Resource Lewiston, as LD 1639 does, misses the bigger picture and the more serious impact that Maine's own waste is having on our environment.

Currently, the processing facilities in Maine only take in a fraction of our own CDD.

According to the Maine DEP's bi-annual report on statewide waste generation released in 2021, the amount of CDD generated in Maine in 2019 was approximately 440,000 tons. Of that amount only about 3% was recycled the remaining tonnages of in state CDD is unprocessed and landfilled. There are a number of reasons for that including geographical location and transportation expense.

A broader environmental vision calls on us to address this issue head on. We need to develop more infrastructure in Maine to process and recycle the hundreds of thousands of tons of in-state generated CDD waste that is currently being landfilled. There are beneficial uses available for that material if it were processed and recycled.

If we want to preserve landfill disposal capacity for Maine and encourage the recycling of more CDD, we must focus on that issue. We must turn our collective efforts to the unprocessed CDD waste generated in Maine and take action to address our incapacity to deal with it. Casella stands ready to work with the sponsor, this committee and interested stakeholders to make that happen.

I would be happy to take any questions.

Shelby D Wright
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