

Ed Spencer
Old Town
LD 259

Dear Chairs Brenner and Tucker and Members of the ENR Committee,
I am writing in support of LD 259, which would raise fees for several categories of landfilled waste. This action is long overdue and necessary to reduce the amounts of landfilled materials in Maine.

The Maine State Waste Hierarchy is in statute and requires that we as a society landfill waste only as a last resort. The fee increases would put some teeth into the Hierarchy and potentially reduce landfill inputs while incentivizing waste handling methods higher on the hierarchy scale.

The increased fee on Municipal Solid Waste, commonly thought of as curbside waste, will anger many town managers who currently send their MSW to landfills. Perhaps the increased fee will lead to better recycling efforts and removal of organic wastes through composting. Recycled materials vary in value on a cyclical basis, and the trend is currently toward increased values.

The history of CDD fees in Maine illustrates why we have become a destination for other states' demolition debris. Before about a dozen years ago, there was no fee for CDD landfilled in Maine. There was a Bill before ENR to impose fees on CDD, beginning with \$7/ton and going to \$8/ton the following year. Then Senate Chair Tom Saviello announced to the Committee that he had met with waste industry officials over the weekend and that all they would agree to was \$1/ton the first year and \$2/ton the next year. This was rather stunning news to those of us observing the Committee. The fact that a Committee Chair had met in secret with the waste industry reinforced the commonly held opinions that politicians and waste industry "cooperation" without public oversight often leads to corruption.

Raising the landfilled CDD fee will require that wastes either first discarded outside of Maine or within our borders be reduced and recycled to the maximum extent. This is a capitalist market-based solution to Maine's low waste recycling percentage.

There are efforts underway to alter LD 1639, whose passage would greatly reduce waste imports into Maine's state-owned Juniper Ridge landfill in Old Town, which is within one and three quarters of a mile from my home. The waste industry, led by Casella, is disseminating the theory that the real problem with CDD in Maine is that instate wastes are being landfilled. LD 259 would offer strong disincentives to landfilling actual Maine CDD waste. Many construction debris materials from remodeling or new construction could be used by others who wish to avoid the expense of home improvement or building simple outdoor structures such as wood sheds or chicken coops, etc.

This is common practice at many transfer stations in Maine- materials are set aside for reuse.

I urge you to listen to Kevin Roche as he testifies on this Bill, as well as gives his impression of the waste practices in Maine and how we can get to a better and less wasteful future for our citizens. These fees would add very little to any responsible business or municipal waste handlers.

One last image to leave you with: When the State acquired the Juniper Ridge Landfill in 2003 and 2004 both Casella and government officials promised that there would be no putrescible waste (think "rottable waste") or out of state wastes allowed. Now we have pictures of eagles feeding on MSW at the State of Maine's only functional landfill, which is composed of about one-third of wastes from beyond our borders. LD 259, in combination with LD 1639 and other efforts would help fulfill those promises.

Respectfully yours,
Ed Spencer
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