

Responses to Questions asked at the Project Overview Meeting #2

November 21, 2024, Town of Alton, Town Hall

Below are questions and answers provided at the second Public Overview Meeting held by BGS and NEWSME about the proposed Phase II Expansion of the Juniper Ridge Landfill in Old Town. Both questions and answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

1. Is Environmental Justice being discussed tonight?

These meetings are part of the response to Environmental Justice concerns. They are intended to provide the public with more detailed information about the Landfill Expansion and the opportunity to ask questions about the Expansion and provide any comments.

2. Why is there no public meeting on Indian Island?

The meetings are being held in Alton and Old Town because the Landfill is located in Old Town and borders the town of Alton.

3. Was the traffic increase expected 24 hours a day?

No. There will be a slight increase in traffic over 2023 volumes, but the increase will only occur during the operating hours of the landfill: Monday – Friday from 6:00 am – 5:00pm, and Saturday from 7:30am – 12:00pm. Traffic analysis conducted by Gorrill Palmer indicates that expansion is expected to increase by about 10 trucks per day during working hours.

4. Last expansion Casella said traffic was not important, but now it is. Why the change?

Traffic is analyzed per Maine DEP requirements as part of the expansion process. Traffic for the Phase II Expansion is being evaluated by the same consultant who conducted the evaluation for the first expansion, using the same methodology.

5. Are the trucks named in the traffic study trash trucks or are there more vehicles being looked at?

The traffic study included all vehicles entering and exiting the landfill. That includes construction vehicles and trucks hauling waste for disposal.

6. What day has the most traffic?

Tuesday has the most traffic.

7. Did Casella or the State consult with the Penobscot Nation on important cultural wildlife species?

As required for the permitting process, all five of Maine's tribes were asked if there were important cultural or archaeological features at the site. The Mi'kmaq and Maliseet responded that they do not have important features at the site. The two bands of the Passamaquoddy responded that they defer to the Penobscot Nation. The Penobscot Nation has not responded, although multiple attempts have been made to contact them.

8. What is the expansion in yardage?

The Phase II Expansion is 11.9 million cubic yards.

9. Have migratory animals been looked at in the wetland habitats?

Yes. The Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) studied the impact to migratory species and concluded that it is not significant because the impacted areas are not a conducive habitat. The pools are small and overgrown with trees and vegetation making it difficult for migratory bird species to land and take off again.

11. What does it mean that one of the functions and values of wetlands is sediment/ toxic retention?

Wetlands provide multiple functions and values. One function is that they naturally retain sediment and toxins that may be attached to the sediment, primarily due to their location in the landscape. Evaluation of this and several other functions is a standard part of every wetland evaluation.

12. Who does the ground and surface water testing required by the MEDEP?

Sevee and Maher Engineers conducts the sampling, and the samples are sent to Maine Environmental Laboratory in Yarmouth, Maine, which is a private laboratory that is certified by the State. Some samples may be sent on to other certified laboratories, depending on the compound being tested.

13. Are the wetlands tested for PFAS contamination?

No, PFAS testing is not required as part of the wetland survey.

14. Where does construction material come from, and are those trucks considered in the traffic study?

The majority of aggregates used for construction come from an abutting property with internal access to the JRL site, but some materials are transported from outside locations. All construction vehicles were included in the traffic study.

15. What is the effect of the landfill on the local eagle population?

According to wildlife biologists who have been to the site, JRL and the surrounding area has the highest concentration of bald eagles in Maine, thus the effect of the landfill has been to increase the local eagle population.

17. Has there been any investigation into the bioaccumulation of PFAS compounds in eagles?

No.

18. What are the gas readings on the Landfill Surface Scans?

Daily gas scans are used to determine if there are any areas on the working face of the landfill or the temporary cap that require repair. If there is an elevated reading, the repair is the top priority for that day. Data from quarterly surface scans are included in the landfill's annual report and semi-annual air emissions report.

19. Does Casella have the trash cleaned up on Interstate 95?

Casella uses temporary hired employment to clean up any windblown litter on the Landfill Road, as well as the Bennoch Road from the landfill entrance to the on ramp for Interstate 95 South. (Also see Question 28, below)

20. What is the composition of the deodorizer used at JRL?

The deodorizer consists of three ingredients that are proprietary to the manufacturer.

21. Is more being done to control odor?

Yes, JRL will be further limiting the daily open area of waste and, as required by the Public Benefit Determination, will hire a consultant to conduct an odor study and recommend potential improvements.

21. What wastes create the most gases?

MSW bypass and biosolids contain organic material that produce methane during the decomposition process. Construction Demolition Debris (CDD) can contain gypsum which can create Hydrogen Sulfide gas when mixed with wet wastes.

22. Why not limit the amount of the biggest gas producing wastes?

If the Orrington incinerator and the Hampden processing facility come back online, the MSW bypass will be greatly reduced. JRL is the State's landfill was established to take the solid waste and biosolids created in Maine that cannot go to another Maine landfill.

23. Why not use contaminated soils from land application of biosolids for ADC or bulking sludge?

Soil is not considered a viable bulking agent for sludge and would not provide adequate structure to bulk the sludge. Removal of soils from land application sites would not improve the underlying groundwater, would leave farms and other areas where sludge was deposited without any topsoil, and has not been considered as a viable clean-up alternative.

24. Does Casella test residential wells?

Yes, Casella tests nearby residential wells upon request.

25. How long was the 2017 expansion supposed to last?

The 2017 expansion was expected to last 8-10 years. The first cell (Cell 11) was constructed in 2018 and the Phase I Expansion is expected to be full by early 2028.

26. Why do we need Casella? Why not another operator?

Casella is contracted to operate the Juniper Ridge Landfill until February 4, 2034, through an Operating Services Agreement (OSA) with the State of Maine, Bureau of General Services. When the State put the contract out to bid in 2003, Casella was the only company to respond.

27. What happens if the DEP rejects the expansion?

If the Expansion Application is rejected, Casella will limit the amount of material being disposed of at JRL in order to satisfy the contractual obligations for capacity outlined in the OSA. Existing landfills in the state do not have capacity to receive the waste. Their ability to expand due to geotechnical, regulatory, and other factors is unknown. Even if permitted and feasible, they could not expand rapidly enough to handle the additional waste. The alternative would be to ship waste out of state at significant additional cost to Maine residents.

28. Who does the public contact about issues regarding trucks entering the landfill? (tarps blowing around)

Casella maintains a telephone line 207-394-4376 to receive complaints from residents. The Maine State Police can also be contacted to report of an insecure load being transported to the landfill.

29. Can you check on the visual impacts on Kennedy Lane and Dolloff Road and see if screening would be possible?

Yes, this will be reviewed.

30. Is the Jay landfill a viable alternative?

The Jay landfill has permitted space equivalent to only about one year of the waste received at JRL. This space is a vertical expansion and therefore would not be able to economically landfill biosolids.

31. In the Public Benefit Determination approval, the state discusses minimal impacts to the groundwater from leachate.

There are no impacts to the groundwater from landfill leachate. The site has been monitored extensively for 35 years and is currently monitored at 81 locations. None of these monitoring points show water quality with characteristics resembling landfill leachate. This will be discussed further during Meeting #3.