00:02:24.630 --> 00:02:50.180

Laura Mitchell: Good evening, my name is Laura Mitchell, and I am an independent consultant and a neutral moderator for this session. I'll be moderating this meeting and keeping time as a neutral party to ensure public comment is gathered on the topic proposed. Which are changes to the Operating Services agreement at Juniper Ridge, Landfill.

 And with us tonight is Lane Gould, who is the landfill manager for the State Bureau of General Services, and Bill Longfellow, the Director of the Department of Administrative and Financial Services Bureau of General services. And the agenda for this evening will be as follows, I will turn it over to Bill and he will share an introduction to chapter 480 that requires this public hearing and why we are here tonight. Then we will be taking your comments and the State will be responding to comments and questions in writing.

 And that will happen by 5 Pm. On Thursday, April 11th. The State will not be responding to questions at this hearing tonight and so responses will be included to this evening's comment, along with the written comment again, that's by 5 Pm. April 11th and so there are some guidelines for tonight's session so everybody has a chance to speak, and we can move through this smoothly.

 And for State public hearings overall. And as moderator, and I'll be sharing some ground rules and asking the group to uphold these. So, this is a listening session to hear your comments and questions related to the proposed operating services agreement change and I will ask individuals that want to submit public comment to come to the microphone one at a time, and please state your name and the town of your residence, or state the group that you're here representing as you come up before you provide your comment. And I'd like to have the room remain quiet while somebody is at the microphone, so everybody present can hear their public comment and understand what they're saying. This public hearing is on the proposed amendment to the Juniper Ridge landfill Operating Services Agreement. And so, we would ask that you please limit your comment to that topic, and we intend for this meeting to run until 8 Pm.

 We will provide some flexibility beyond that because we know that we have people joining us virtually to provide comment as well. But we would ask that you keep your comments kind of under 3 min. And if necessary, I'll kind of serve as a reminder to keep those comments within that time depending on how the evening progresses.

 Written comments. If you feel like you have more to say, or if you have comments after you hear others speak. Written comments are also being accepted through 5 Pm. Monday, February 26, so you can submit written comments through Monday, 5 Pm. February 26th.

 And the audio of this meeting is being recorded, and public comments will be recorded. And so, the responses can be shared on April 11th.

 So now I think I'm going to turn it over to Bill Longfellow. And again, he's the Director of Bureau of General Services in the State of Maine's Department of Administrative and financial services.

(Bill Longfellow) Thank you, Laura.

so, I want to thank you all for coming out tonight to this public hearing this evening, and to those who are joining the public hearing virtually.

 We recognize that the topic of landfills and the associated issues raised a lot of concerns and questions from the public, so we thank you in advance for your input. We are here to listen to those questions and concerns as relates to tonight's particular topic, extending the Operating Services Agreement, period.

This hearing is being held because the Bureau was seeking to extend the Juniper Ridge landfill Operating Services Agreement termination date from February 5th, 2034, to February 5th, 2040,

 Because of the proposed expansion at the Juniper Ridge Landfill, The Bureau is following, chapter 480. A rule that originally applied to the State planning office when it had responsibility for State for solid waste management and for State owned landfills.

 After the State planning office was eliminated, solid waste management responsibilities passed to the Maine DEP and ownership of JRL and passed to the Bureau General services, along with oversight of the Operating Services Agreement. Also, to avoid any confusion, the JRL Landfill expansion application will receive its own review through the Maine department of environmental protection.

 That is an entirely separate process than what is being discussed here tonight.

 The rule that governs changes to an Operating Services Agreement is chapter 480, which requires us to hold a hearing to accept public comments when certain changes are proposed to an operating services agreement between the Bureau and its contracted operator of a State-owned solid waste disposal facilities.

 Chapter 480, section 2. Covers what changes to and of what changes to an operating service. Agreement would trigger public hearing requirement. An extension of the (OSA) Operating Services agreement term would create changes to a facilities operation to occur in such a way as to impact traffic, odor, noise. or public safety in the abiding communities. Because of this public hearing is being held.

Ch. 480, section 3 explains how the State will consider public comments and respond to them in terms of consistency with State laws and policies. The Bureau will consider whether changes to the operating Services agreement are consistent with the following statutes and policies.

The State's waste management hierarchy, the State's recycling goal. the State's waste management and recycling plan.

 The Bureau will complete its review of comments and questions within 45 calendar days from the closing date for public comments.

The bureau shall respond to comments and writing and make those responses publicly available on the bureau website.

Laura Mitchell: Thank you, Bill. So again, I'm here to moderate the public comment. And it's time for public comment. Now.

 I'm a neutral facilitator of this session, so I look forward to having you come up. I will need to remind you of the ground rules that I shared earlier. If that becomes an issue, because we really want to make sure that everyone here has a chance to speak.

 So, I would ask, who’s ever ready to come up? You can come up and provide your comment.

(Ed Spencer) well, thank you my name is Ed Spencer I've lived in West old Town since 1977, and I'm here to tell you why I think we should reject any extension of this operating services agreement.

Extending this OSA with Casella would only perpetuate injustices involved with the creation and operation of Maine’s first State owned landfill.

 1989, in response to fears that Maine was becoming the dumping ground in New England landmark legislation was enacted, and commercial landfills were banned. The reason publicly owned Landfills could ban imports of waste was because, as a market participant they would be exempt from some interstate commerce rules to the contrary. Unfortunately, to date, the State is owner of Juniper Ridge formerly with SPO, and now BGS has failed to act as a market participant and ban waste imports. Instead, they have enabled Casella to circumvent the intent of that 1989 legislation.

The state has abdicated this responsibility, which was mandated by that legislation, has to date rubber stamped every Casella action.

This is a quote from the Board Environment section annual report from 2,018 quote.

“The Board has been concerned that in the licensing and appeal proceedings before the Board, BGS and DECD consistently deferred to Casella, creating at least the impression that the facility is being managed as a private landfill for the benefit of Casella rather than as a publicly owned asset for the benefit of the State and its citizens.

 Preemptively extending Casella's contract on the assumption that the landfill will be expanded, totally undermines all the stages of this process.

Casella, with the State as owner has managed to turn Maine’s first operational landfill into a commercial landfill, with few restrictions on materials that the 1989 Act was specifically created to avoid extending this OSA, which still has 10 years remaining to accommodate Casella’s wishes, exemplifies the history of Juniper Ridge, which wishes and needs of the citizens of Maine are secondary to Casella’s business.

Thankfully, we're getting a chance to speak out against an extension. Any prolongation should first require a thorough review of the first 20 years of Casella at Juniper Ridge, the Legislature's Environment Natural Resources Committee recently unanimously passed Ld. 2135, which mandates no extension until a public benefit determination portion of an expansion has been completed.

This bill also requires full disclosure of all contracts Casella holds with entities. Whose waste ends up in the landfill which DEP. has recommended as a precondition for any extension or expansion.

 I will be submitting written comments. I've been going through the OSA. I see some lack of compliance in there which I'll detail for you. Thank you for this opportunity.

78

00:14:28.700 --> 00:14:29.890

Laura Mitchell: Good evening.

(Maulian Bryant) My name is Maulian Bryant. I serve as a Penobscot Nation travel ambassador and thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment tonight on behalf of Penobscot Nation and Ed has done a whole lot of heavy lifting. So, I won't duplicate a lot of the points that he made. He did a great job up here.

My role. The tribe is to serve as a representative from our sovereign nation to local, municipal, state, and Federal governments. I also advocate for policy and educate on issues affecting our people, land, and resources, and it works extensively with the State legislature.

 Juniper Ridge Landfill is very close in proximity to not only the main residential community of the Penobscot Nation, but also near other tribal lands and waters that are crucial to our hunting and fishing culture.

 We live every day with the odors and fumes from the landfill in the air we breathe that gets into work, clothing as well as the harmful runoff and contaminants that make their way into the Penobscot River. The river is part of our ancestral and present-day territory, and the health and well-being of the river has a direct and absolute effect on the health and well-being of our tribal citizens.

 We are sustenance fishing people, and we have not had waters that are healthy enough to produce fish to consume in amounts that would sustain us for multiple generations.

 It is not uncommon for historically marginalized and vulnerable groups of people to be victims of environmental discrimination in the form of having to live near hazardous operations, like landfills, paper mills, power plants, and other emitters of pollutants.

 Having lived in the nation most of my life I can speak to how unpleasant this can be, unpleasant and dangerous. So, we are aware that tonight this hearing is focused on a specific contract matter. But I want I felt the need to stress the overall negative impact that living near this landfill in its current operation has had on the Penobscot Nation.

 So, a matter of the process because of the questionable handling of the landfill. Currently, it makes no sense to allow any extensions or accommodations until appropriate steps have been taken. At the very least, we should only be talking about extending this contract after environmental impact assessment, and it's done by Dep and concerns about the PFAS Chemicals, and the Leachate are addressed.

 The colonization of Maine meant that our connection to our sacred homelands, where people have lived and been good stewards since time immemorial was violently disrupted. We worked hard to restore so much of what was stolen from us, but it is frustrating and unfortunate that we still must live with oppressive threats to our mother Earth right under our noses. Literally.

 We do look forward to continued engagement on the host of processes that may occur here, and matters regarding Juniper Ridge, and I will say that in my tenure as tribal ambassador I have seen great improvements in the tribal State relationship, and we truly do look forward to working with the State to find solutions. Thank you.

91

00:17:31.750 --> 00:17:32.779

Laura Mitchell: Thank you.

92

00:17:42.090 --> 00:17:43.080

Laura Mitchell: Greetings.

(Nickie Sekera) My name is Nikki Sekera. I'm here to testify against the Bureau of General Services’ extension of Casella's Operating Service Agreement beyond the current 2034 termination date.

 The Bureau's mission is clearly stated to establish and maintain a physical environment that supports a safe and productive experience for State government employees and all who visit any State domain facilities.

 It states you have one primary goal. To the, to the to be the very best and most effective provider of those services.

 According to the Bureau's file reports, of all the complaints about Juniper Ridge, 56 were formally documented in 2023 to Casella from residents regarding Juniper Ridge operations.

 On May 15th of last year, at around 8 PM, A friend was driving home southbound on Interstate 95 and mentioned on social media that Juniper Ridge had caught on fire. Crews from Bradley, Alton, Old Town, and Hudson responding to the scene around the same time. a couple of colleagues and I drove nearby the site to document what was happening.

 The fire, which by this point covered a couple of acres, was a so significant column, billowing smoke, and it stood up against night sky.

 The wind was blowing between 5 and 6 miles per hour that evening, in an eastward direction. Though I was positioned north of the fire, the ash and odor had saturated the air.

 There were workers nearby who were standing guard at the entrance to guide emergency vehicles entering the facility. These workers were wearing no protection from the initial fallout of the fire.

 My colleagues and I had surgical grade masks which were largely inefficient to protect us, but at least filter the larger airborne particles.

 After my camera caught the density of particulate matter and the air from the light cast for one of the workers trucks, we decided it would be best for our health to leave.

 We noted that our bodies and cars were coated with this ash as we were leaving the area.

 The ash carrying toxins was deposited downwind and onto Penobscot Nation reservation lands and waters as well as residential areas.

This happened during the annual Fiddlehead harvest season. A cultural practice of Wabanaki people that provides critical sustenance needs.

And our bodies and the environment are being expected to absorb the harmful impacts on this Landfill.

 The landfill office in Alton referred sunlight media requests to Casella's communications that they contact their central office in Vermont, saying they are not at liberty to answer any questions.

The old Town Fire Department also said we should contact Casella and that they have no comment regarding this matter. It would be reasonable to expect that our public service officials would be supported in advising the public on health and safety and the means to protect us from the rising threats associated with volatile landfill.

 No warnings were issued in the public about the health hazards of the landfill fire. Neither at that time or happening since that time.

It's not a matter of if another fire will happen. But when, as the underlying problems that created the fire have yet to be addressed.

The Bureau has an obligation to the people of the State to ensure that the management operations of Juniper Ridge is better centered on public health and safety and support, to state waste hierarchy to its fullest extent. So, I asked that this contract extension is rejected until these obligations have been fulfilled. Thank you. Thank you.

119

00:21:36.530 --> 00:21:37.460

Laura Mitchell: That's correct.

(Don White) Good evening. My name is Don White. I'm a lifelong resident in Maine. I'm a retired educator, and I'm a lifelong farmer, which I currently do.

121

00:21:52.290 --> 00:21:59.070

Laura Mitchell: Can you state your community of residents.

(Don White) Bucksport. I won't use the word landfill because I don't believe it's accurate. Landfills are trash dumps. that's all. They are the cheapest way to throw trash throw our garbage out, throw it on the ground, and call it good.

 The Juniper Ridge Landfill is the worst one, but there are many.

 I'm not here to ask the State to continue the crazy pattern of continuing to support landfills and extend and move things beyond. We need to start forcing our culture and our State and ourselves to reduce, reuse, recycle.

 Take those seriously. We cannot continue to create, toxic, waste dumps.

 to create major sources of pollution for all, for multi generations. This is lunacy.

We need to start doing putting a few bucks in and start figuring out, how do we work with industry to create products that are biodegradable, etc., it can be done. This is just a money-making operation. Waste has become a commodity. It comes from wherever we've got to stop the lunacy.

 You just have to stop the continued pattern of throwing stuff in the ground. And that's the way we're gonna do it. There's other ways. There's reusable things. We can force better recycling units. We can force companies to start producing better products. But Juniper Ridge, it's been a mess for a long time as many landfills have.

 But I'm tired of. I'm tired of trash dumps, destroying communities, and they will continue to destroy communities. They will continue to pour untreated Leachate, as some landfills currently do. right into the Penobscot river. They're located to rivers. They were easy places to throw the job and easy places to dump up the toxic materials. We've got to stop the lunacy. I hope this 6-year deadline to be to be squelched.

 quickly, quickly! Thank you.

138

00:24:20.400 --> 00:24:29.839

Laura Mitchell: As folks provide their public comment. Please stay focused on the Operating services agreement that this hearing is for. Thank you.

(Chuck Leithiser) Good evening and thank you. My name's Chuck Leithiser. I'm a resident of Old Town. I'm also a member of the city of Old Towns, Juniper Ridge Advisory Committee. I don't see how BGS can actually begin considering an extension of an agreement operating services agreement with Casella for the Juniper Ridge landfill.

 as the current operations do not be or comply with the aspects of the license and the Operating Service Agreement. Currently. for example.

 the agreement says that the landfill operator will control odors, I can tell you, as a resident of Old Town, and so can anyone else who lives anywhere near Full town. The orders are not under control it stinks it stinks 24 7.

 The only difference in the smell is the way the wind blows. Well, if you could drag through full circle all the way around that you would smell it, no matter what time you were there.

 As has also been mentioned.

 The agreement says, if they do, landfill will not pollute the waters of the state. We know that the leachate is full of PFAS. We know that the wastewater treatment plant at 9 dragons where the leech goes, does nothing to remove or reduce the leachate before it is dumped right into the Penobscot River. Those are just 2 examples, major examples where they're currently out of compliance. I would ask that the Bureau does nothing to extend an agreement with the operator until they are at least simple compliance with the current agreements. Thank you very much.

That's great. Thank you.

(Elizabeth Sekera) Hello! My name is Elizabeth Sekera, currently a resident of Bangor. We grew up in Eddington, have lived all over the country and recently have moved back to Bangor. I am a health equity expert and working at a national and State level on health equity issues.

 And specifically, the Medicaid populations. And in Maine I have that current estimate about 410,000 enrollees, which mean also has a responsibility for it. And so, these are also the most marginalized folks who are involved in these programs. And when we look at water as life, water is a right. clean water, we have to consider that and Medicaid as well. So therefore, I consider this a big issue for a lot of State agencies, not just yours, because we look at social determinants of health, air, and water, quality or Number one, and history is already shown, not just in the State of Maine, but all over the country if we don't have proper accountability around what is being dumped into our air and waters.

Those who suffer most are those who are already the most marginalized by our communities. And this where JRL is, it already shows that we'll just repeat history over and over. I like everyone else who is already spoken really encourage you to not extend this contract until you really do have proof that what they're what they are doing, and in transparent ways of what is being put in to our air and water and not having look, the local people being responsible for monitoring and testing the waters because we don't have the appropriate infrastructure in house to be able to do that as a State level. It really is the State's responsibility to have appropriate auditing infrastructure and quality improvement initiatives.

 Around this and the just reading the history behind what has happened now is a perfect time to not extend that contract. Look at the operations of what is happening and seeing, what do we need to do to have better oversight and accountability of these companies? Essentially, also a contract they are looking at to bring in more waste. And what we are doing with that waste. We have a large, a long history and immigration as well.

 In our state. My family is French, Canadian, and paper mills, where the thing right and those communities are the ones, most impacted by cancer. There's again a long history, and it's just big shout out to the Penobscot Nation. Thank you for all of the work. They are legacy holders, and we should be looking to them for all of this. Please don’t extend.

(Ezra Sasserman) Hello everyone. This is very formal, I said, Hello, Maine Bureau General services. But I hear you guys and I represent the organization of Maine Climate Action Now, or MCAN.

 we're a coalition made up of climate justice organizations from across the State.

 What happens to our waste is important. Maine deserves to have its ways managed by institution or company that puts the long-term health of people and climate above short-term financial gains.

 Another way that Juniper Ridge landfall is currently operated. Waste is treated as a commodity that's meant to grow shareholder profits.

Over the past years Casella has accepted consistently large amounts of construction waste from other New England States, been a willing partner to the companies producing this waste charging fees for every ton of debris buried. And in this way, it's a business model, encourages practices that unsustainably expand the landfill actually incentivize the transportation of trash from the surrounding States into Maine. To make matters worse, the construction and demolition debris that make up a two-thirds of new material buried at the landfill are treated with the forever chemicals and other toxins. These are the exact same chemicals and toxins that have been found at alarming levels in the in the river.

The proximity to landfill to the Penobscot River, to the Penobscot nation out there, and residential communities. There's a lot at stake and no room for mismanagement from Casella, or from the State of Maine on this issue.

 A safe and healthy environment for all people. Not the purchase of the most possible ways must be the priority of me, and any institutions or companies and contracts with

For reasons just highlighted, the operating contract for Juniper Ridge, and should not be renewed. And then just overall the state of Maine. Let's do a better job understanding the negative societal environmental impacts and treating based as a commodity, especially thinking long term for the help of future generation.

 Thank you so much.

169

00:31:18.940 --> 00:31:22.159

Laura Mitchell: are there others that want to provide public comment.

170

00:31:32.850 --> 00:31:34.140

Laura Mitchell: The looking cup

(Bill Lippincott) I live in Hamden site of the closed Casella managed pine tree landfill, which is still leaking. By the way.

 I would like to know how the state Bureau general services. See your role in providing oversight of the operations of a private waste industry Casella Waste Systems. Our State-owned Juniper Ridge landfill in the notice of the public hearing, it states the proposed change in the operating Service Agreement cause changes in the facilities, operation to occur in such a way as to impact traffic, odor, noise for public safety.

 In the same notice, it proposes to limit comments only to extending the termination date.

Then, you say, comments pertaining to other topics will not be accepted at the time of the public hearing.

 I would like to know why the public should not comment on changes that impact, traffic, odor, noise, and public safety that will be caused, as stated in the notice from the proposed change in the OSA.

 I'm dismayed that your Bureau of General Services has put forward. This proposal to amend the OSA only by extending the date without a thorough review of the contract on

 I question how BGS is safeguarding in interest of the people of Maine.

Are you representing the interests of our State and the Maine public.

 Or are you representing the interest of the private waste industry, Casella waste systems. I hope you will listen to the concerns of all the people that are speaking today.

and start to act in a way that protects our interests, not Casella's.

 Thank you.

(John Banks) Good evening. My name's John Banks. resident of Orono. I'm a citizen of the Penobscot Indian nation. and I recently retired from a 40-year career with the Penobscot Nation as the natural resources director then also to represent to tribe on the Juniper Ridge Landfill Advisory Committee for many, many years. So, I'm fairly familiar with the operation up there.

 and what I wanted to do right now is just express a real concern that I have for the continued operation of this landfill without some actions that I feel need to be taken to address some of these issues before the extension is granted. My particular concern is the impact on all the animals, birds, insects, and fish that is so important to the Penobscot Nation. It's part of our cultural fabric.

And it defines who we are as Penobscots.

 Now I can take you to a place where you can watch while the eagles. flying every single day from their nesting site on the Penobscot River to the Juniper Ridge landfill to feed on the garbage that's dumped up there.

 Every single day bald eagles are flying from the Penobscot River, where they nest to the landfill to feed on garbage.

 The bald eagle has made a tremendous comeback from the brink of extinction. It was taken off from the endangered species list because the populations had recovered to a point. We’ve spent 65 million dollars restoring fish to the river. and one of the beneficiaries is the bald eagles due to the massive alewives runs that have resulted from the Dam removal projects. I fear that the impacts from these eagles feeding on this garbage is going to set back that recovery of that population that is so important, not only to the country as a national symbol. but to something that is so important to the cultural integrity of the Penobscot Nation.

 I want to know what the impact is to these eagles from feeding on garbage every day.

 And I want to know that. And I would wish that that could be better understood and addressed before we even talk about an expanded timeframe for the operation of his dump. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. Thank you. Thank you.

216

00:37:36.460 --> 00:37:38.449

Laura Mitchell: Are there others with public comment.

217

00:37:56.440 --> 00:37:57.500

Laura Mitchell: Good evening.

(Dick Campbell) My name is Dick Campbell. I live in Orrington, a bump in the road between here and Bucksport and I serve in the Legislature and on the Environment Natural Resource Committee. And I'll try and keep my comments to the contract. Every day in the Legislature, we’re wrestling with what we do with municipal, solid waste.

Today we’ve passed and ought not to pass Another recycling concept on plastic which is only going to put more product into these landfills.

 Back to this contract. As I understand it, there were a possible 3 management entities that wanted to consider this, but as I understand it, there was only one that actually applied. MRC, the Municipal Review Committee which at its start was PERC was one who decided not to, but now, as a major owner in Fiber right

if you.

 PERC is down at this point.

 this a new owner which hopefully will become a major player in the actual solution of the management of municipal solid waste. But right now, we don't have that.

Fiber right is down. So, from what we passed in the legislature today without PERC without Fiber right.

 The only thing we have is the bottom of the hierarchy, landfill.

The legislature and the DEP are working hard to find those solutions.

 back to the contract.

 I'm assuming the contract has been written.

 We do have an operator who has been there for a good number of years, who is actually in the management of solid waste.

So, my recommendation is to review the contract to find ways to get the stakeholders, including this operator into solving this problem.

 The committee was looking at another landfill in Jay, which may or may not work out.

 again, the new owners of PERC are looking at a process that has no residue. So that will be no

additional product going into landfills. But we're a long way away.

 The application for this landfill to expand.

 I'm hearing the last application was, it took 5 years.

We're in a crisis right now.

so, I guess my recommendation of where we are today. And here at the hearing, is, let's review that contract to find out how all the stakeholders, including Casella can come up with a solution So then the legislature can raise this product, municipal solid waste which has become a natural resource which is not going away.

So, if we can take a little step back and look at this contract and find out how we can find solutions together.

 I think that will be important. Thank you.

261

00:42:10.380 --> 00:42:17.879

Laura Mitchell: Are there others in the room that would like to provide public comment. We have some folks that are remote to provide public comment as well, but I would like to provide the opportunity to folks in the room first.

263

00:42:25.540 --> 00:42:26.470

Laura Mitchell: Thank you.

(Glen Koehler) My name's Glen Koehler. I'm a citizen of Orono, but I used to live in Old Town, not far from where the dump is.

My comments sent around 5 P’s just to help me remember and help you remember. So, the first 2 Ps are people in place. When I lived out on South Gate Road in the late 80 s. early 90 s. When the original dump went in.

 The corporate malfeasance was to put out literature. That said it was deep in the Maine woods with pictures that cropped out Rt 43, cropped out Bennoch rd., cropped out everything except trees.

 And that wasn't Casella’s fault, but it's kind of set, a tone. And I think some of that tone has continued, needs to be corrected. that the contract needs to be reviewed with corporate behavior at the utmost of being transparent and keeping to their promises.

 The second P is place. You're not gonna move the landfill, but it is precariously positioned, another couple of P’s there, and its intimately connected to the Penobscot river, and that needs to be addressed in any consideration Which extending the contract with that connection poses real hazards that already has had effects.

 So, the next set of P’s is promises. When I was out in Old Town, and that original dump went in, the promise was, look, you know, we're just doing this to keep the mill open. That's only for Mill waste.

 Then that promise was broken, and it became Maine trash only. This is just Maine trash.

 And then that promise so was effectively broken because they change the definition of Maine trash and anything coming in from Massachusetts wherever it could be resorted, and then it became Maine trash that needs to change back to truly Maine trash. We got enough our own trash.

 Take, let's take care of our own needs. Massachusetts can take care of itself. the next P is PFAS. In my day job. I've become involved with the PFAS issue, and I guarantee you it's one of those things. The more you learn about it the worse it gets. The EPA recently recommended changing the drinking water standard down to 4 parts for trillion from the current EPA Standard 70. Maine is using 20 So now they want to go down to 4.

 Well, really, they came out with study a year before that said, actually, it should be 1,000 times lower than that, 4 parts quadrillion which is a ridiculous number. I won’t go into that.

 and that's just for 1 one PFAS, the drinking water standard is for a whole group of them.

 So, in your considerations of the contract. when you take municipal waste streams and concentrate them in one place you're creating a PFAS potential disaster

 again, Penobscot River and everybody living out their people.

 So that really needs attention. Pfas issue is just getting really needs attention. And then, finally, the last P is pollution. Climate change is not just the underlying, overriding issue over a day. It's the existential thing without which and nothing else will matter if we can get a hold of it.

 And that dump is a methane source, and I know I just heard tonight that they are yesterday, not here, but probably their friend who lives out by the dump that they are going to start tapping the methane that is burning it off or letting it seep into the air that needs to be addressed. We need to reduce any methane source comes out of that. It’s probably considerable. Thank you.

290

00:46:18.640 --> 00:46:19.320

Laura Mitchell: Sure.

291

00:46:20.760 --> 00:46:22.210

Laura Mitchell: Others in the room.

(Jill Tompkins) Good evening. Thanks to you. Thanks for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Jill Tompkins, and I am a member of Penobscot Nation as well. But I'm also the Executive director of the main Indian Tribal State Commission. the Commission was set up under the 1980 Main Indian Claims Settlement Act. It's an independent agency intergovernmental has 6 tribal representatives on it, as well as 6 State representatives, and a chairman.

 And so, the responsibility of the Commission is to review the settlement and to see whether it's effective.

 also, to look at the relationship between the tribes and the state and particular areas. So economically, environmentally, natural resources, and so on. And as a consequence, as you look at those we develop, reports, issue recommendations, and studies.

 One of the other responsibilities of the Commission is to make recommendations about fish and wildlife policies on non-Indian lands in order to protect the fish and wildlife stocks on the land and water better. That are within Indian country or within the tribes, and the Commission has responsibility to regulate those boundary waters.

 So, I would urge you on behalf of the Commission not to extend this contract. This is one of those few areas where you really can see that there is a joint concern by both the Penobscot Nation as well as local citizens. This sounds like its extraordinarily detrimental to the area. So, the lack of a lack of studies and review shows that that very minimum thing needs to be done. Every consideration of the extension of the contract should happen. And I guess on a personal level. I'm 60 years old, and I live less than 200 yards from the Penobscot River, and I have never, but I've never attempted to fish that river. My grandmother didn’t want me even to touch the water.

 So, to have that situation continue and possibly be exacerbated. It's really unacceptable. Thank you.

300

00:48:45.580 --> 00:48:51.829

Laura Mitchell: If you have public comment, please come forward. Otherwise, I'll see if there's remote.

301

00:48:52.300 --> 00:48:53.100

Laura Mitchell: country.

(Luke Sekera-Flanders) Hello! My name is Luke Sekera Flanders. I'm here as a member of Community Water Justice and Maine Youth for Climate Justice, and, more importantly, having grown up in Eddington along with Penobscot River, and having many loved ones who live within the range of the impacts of this landfill.

 I do not want to see the future of their health sold off with the extension of this contract.

 in 2018, the World Bank reported that unless drastic measures are taken. The global waste per year will have increased by 70% in 2050.As a result, the already massive waste management industry is growing. To some this presents a lucrative investment opportunity, as we generate more waste and find fewer places to keep it.

 But for the rest of us who do not have the wealth to cushion ourselves from negative environmental impacts and who honor our commonsense obligation to ensure a healthier environment for the benefit and survival of future generations, this is a crisis. We should be reevaluating the waste we generate from waste hierarchy model which favors prevention, minimization, reuse, recycling, and energy recovery before disposal.

 We should be eliminating single use plastics which are comically ubiquitous but remain ubiquitous because it cuts costs.

 The longer we continue to let profit be the deciding measure of what we put into the world and how we manage it the greater the burden we dump onto future generations.

 Casella has shown us time and time again that they are unwilling to respect the environment and the wishes of the community as they continue to import out of State waste and dump inadequately treated Leachate onto the Penobscot River.

 Another blatant display of their mismanagement erupted on May15th. I was there shortly after the fire began with Sunlight Media Collective, the only media on site that evening. It was a horrid sight and a wicked smell.

 Within a short period of time my clothes and vehicle were covered in a filmy layer of ash. The wind carried the smoke and ash full of dioxins east onto the Penobscot Nation, the river, and many miles of nearby forests and residential areas.

 It has been 9 months, and we have heard nothing. The cause of the fire remains a mystery to the public. The state and local officials continue to trust Casella to self-report. All that a contract extension does is bump Casella’s stock price with no tangible benefit to the environment or our communities.

 Why on earth should we give more money, power and market stability to trash profiteers who gain from cramming as much waste as they can into the landfill. and how long will it be before they demand another expansion to the Land.

This is a publicly owned landfill. We have a stake in its oversight, and many of us in this room live within reach of the impacts of its mismanagement, and for these reasons our concerns should weigh heavily in this decision.

 more so than the shareholders and corporate executives and the employees they hide behind. I hope you will consider more than the short-term limited benefits proposed by Casella and their affiliates.

and listen to the impacted community members and consider the burden the extending this contract will pass on to future generations. Thank you.

324

00:52:38.780 --> 00:52:40.280

Laura Mitchell: So, are there others in the room?

325

00:52:46.200 --> 00:52:48.239

Laura Mitchell: Are you coming up? Okay?

326

00:52:51.930 --> 00:53:00.449

Laura Mitchell: If there are folks that are on remote, and they would like to raise their hand. we can start incorporating your public comment as well.

(Beau Michaud) my name is beau Michaud, and I am originally from Fort Kent, but I am attending University of Maine Orono and when I first got to the university many things stood out as odd, the massive amount of seagulls always around campus the odd smells.

and I was warned that the drinking water was not good to drink. when I dug into it, I found out about Juniper Ridge and massive landfill that is damaging the local environment around, not by, you know, by the State, but by many people in this room, who have done the work of actually reporting the damages like those done.

 and each more of my surprise I figured I thought this was a state-owned landfill, and but run by a private company, or operated by a private company, and

 I did more digging into it, and I found out that even though the State of Maine wanted the ban out of State waste in the eighties.

Casella intentionally used a loophole and built the landfill around, importing trash from Massachusetts, and the people in Maine spoke when we voted to stop out of State trash last year. But that's still didn’t stop it, as Casella claimed that the landfill is unstable, and then we continue to import more Massachusetts trash.

 inside, and despite from what I've heard, it's stabilizing, we are still importing still Massachusetts trash.

 We are in a crossroads in our Maine. When it comes to what we're gonna do with our trash for running out space.

 We don't have recycling facilities in the local area at all. We're in a crossroads, really, and I think it's important to look at the character of Casella and what they done. They make money off of importing that trash from Massachusetts. You know, transportation costs. It’s much further from Massachusetts to bring it all the way up here in Maine.

 This is a State-owned landfill, but

 it's not really. it's Casella’s. It's cause. Continue to exploit the people, Maine despite them being the ones who ended up being paid for the site to start with.

 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

339

00:55:09.860 --> 00:55:14.380

Laura Mitchell: I'm gonna shift over to remote unless I see somebody else in the room. You can have a chance later as well.

341

00:55:19.940 --> 00:55:22.870

Laura Mitchell: Are you coming up? Yeah, okay, great. Thank you.

(Dana Colihan) Good evening. My name is Dana Colihan, and I'm co executive director of Slingshot. at Slingshot, where we believe that everyone deserves the right to breathe clean air, drink, clean water, and live healthy and vibrant communities. Which is why I'm here to testify in opposition to the proposed extension, The States Operating Service Agreement with Casella.

 Slingshot is an environmental health and justice organization works alongside communities most impacted by environmental health threats to take aim at polluters and build communities’ power. Through this work we witness the real threat, that landfills and poorly manage landfills, post our communities in our environment.

 We're urging the Bureau of General Services to reject this proposed extension for 3 main reasons.

 Number one Casella has a track record of pollution and mismanagement across the region, and Juniper Ridge Landfill is no exception. You've heard about the persistent and uncontrolled odors tonight. You've heard about the fire that broke out and burn for 4 hours. You heard about the dioxins that are produced and introduced into the environment. When waste is burned, settle onto vegetation The food chain exposure to dioxins have been linked to suppression of the immune system, destruction of hormonal systems, liver damage, skin rashes and more disorders as well as some certain types of cancer.

 Juniper Ridge Landfill has been a source of environmental injustice for decades, dumping minimally treated, PFAS laden leachate into the Penobscot river, a sacred relative to the Penobscot Nation PFAS, also known as forever chemicals, have been also linked to serious health impacts like to decrease fertility, kidney, and testicular cancer. thyroid disease reduced immune system functioning more. The last big reason is that Casella impedes Maine’s waste management hierarchy, goals, and recycling goals.

 Our waste hierarchy statute states that the landfill and should be the last resort, and yet Casella charges exorbitant recycling fees, working against our recycling goals. Casella profits over a billion dollars annually making money off of the disposal of waste at JRL. Our waste management Hierarchy goals are inherently at odds with this company that are is profiting off of maximizing waste disposal.

 We need to be building towards a 0-waste future where we're meaningfully reorienting how we manage resources and materials upstream. We need significant waste reduction, composting, recycling, and industrial redesign for healthier communities and healthcare environment.

 Before any consideration and extension of Casella's operating service agreement. We really need to ensure that environmental justice impacts and fully assessed through an investigation by the Department of Environmental Protection. If anything, Casella's contract should be terminated, not extended, or expanded.

352

00:58:20.280 --> 00:58:26.599

Laura Mitchell: Okay, I am going to oh, we've got yeah. Come on up.

353

00:58:26.630 --> 00:58:27.890

Laura Mitchell: Thank you.

(Russ Saucen) My name's Russ Saucen. I'm from Old town. I live close to the landfill.

 I have noticed recently a lot more seagulls, so I'm not sure what's going on there. I am against an extension of the landfill.

 but I believe that it's not, this extension of the contract is going to take place. There's really not much we, as the public have for saying that it's just gonna happen, because we've got the state, which is the fox guarding the hen house, which is the landfill. So really, for all of us to be up here and to express that we don't want this. It's gonna happen, anyway. If it's gonna happen, then I think the contract should be tied directly to no more expansions.

 we're gonna give you, but no more expansions, and it should also have some sort of clause that says the amount of waste that's going in there not increase on a yearly basis, but to decrease on a yearly basis?

That's all. I thank you.

361

00:59:37.000 --> 00:59:37.680

Laura Mitchell: Okay.

362

00:59:44.080 --> 00:59:53.510

Laura Mitchell: alright. I'm gonna shift to some remote public comment. And if there are people that change their mind in the room and want to speak, you still may.

363

01:00:00.870 --> 01:00:01.980

Laura Mitchell: Nora.

364

01:00:04.700 --> 01:00:05.929

Laura Mitchell: Are you ready?

365

01:00:06.580 --> 01:00:14.500

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): I am ready. How how's the sound? Can you hear me? If you could state your name and town of residence when you present? That would be great.

01:01:17.960 --> 01:01:24.649

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): okay. But I don't see an option for anyone to see me. I don't. I don't see an option to turn on any video. Is that fine?

379

01:01:24.960 --> 01:01:26.349

Lane Gould: That's fine. But

380

01:01:27.420 --> 01:01:31.780

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): okay, yeah, every time you speak there's a strange echo. Am I having the same effect.

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): Well, I wish there were camera, but I don't see that option. In any case. Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Nora Bosworth, and I'm an attorney for the Conservation Law Foundation.

 I wanna underscore that CLF will be submitting substantive written comment by the 26 and use my few minutes tonight. Can you hold on? We're having trouble hearing you.

Okay.

387

01:02:07.450 --> 01:02:09.149

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): Yeah. Can you hear me now?

389

01:02:16.550 --> 01:02:20.240

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): Do you wanna try someone else and see if it's my computer or your system?

397

01:03:36.960 --> 01:03:39.130

Adam Nordell: Hello, there! Can you hear me?

398

01:03:39.430 --> 01:03:40.130

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): Huh?

399

01:03:46.400 --> 01:03:48.760

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): A regular zoom link would probably do it.

400

01:04:17.990 --> 01:04:19.149

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): Can you hear me now?

401

01:04:28.450 --> 01:04:31.579

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): You've muted yourself. I can't hear you.

402

01:06:50.180 --> 01:06:54.139

Adam Nordell: You're muted, Laura. I'm not sure if you're talking to us in the virtual room.

403

01:06:58.290 --> 01:07:10.930

Laura Mitchell: Okay? So, we're gonna take your public comment. There's a possibility that not everybody in the room is going to hear. But the State is going to be here and will listen to your public comment.

 and, all public comment will be recorded, and responses will be available as of April eleventh. So, Nora, do you want to go first?

405

01:07:24.940 --> 01:07:26.940

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): Sure. Can you hear me clearly this time.

406

01:07:27.310 --> 01:07:28.300

Laura Mitchell: Yes.

407

01:07:29.180 --> 01:07:30.170

Nora Bosworth, (she/her): okay.

 la, just stop me if you can't thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Nora Bosworth, and, like I said, I'm an attorney for the Conservation Law Foundation. I want to underscore that CLF will be submitting substantive written comment by the 26th and use my few minutes tonight to speak to the highly concerning timing of the proposed contract extension.

We're here because Casella seeks to extend their contract for Juniper Ridge in anticipation of the proposed expansion.

 The process for a landfill expansion to be approved is extensive. The public has a right to weigh in at numerous points over the course of months, even years.

 These procedural safeguards are not accidental, but instead reflect a well-known truth. Landfill expansions can and frequently do harm our communities and our natural resources, and therefore the public has legal rights in participating, and, if they so choose, in opposing such expansions.

 at the work. Session for LD. 2135. We heard from BGS that Casella does not want to invest the resources in proceeding with the landfill expansion application without the assurance that their contract will be extended.

 but the public's right to meaningfully participate in the landfill expansion process should not be weighed against a multibillion-dollar company's desire to cut corners. As the Environment and Natural Resources Committee pointed out, we have not even begun the public benefits determination process for this landfill.

extending Casella's contract before the decision to expand the landfill has been finalized, and, most importantly, before the public has had meaningful opportunity to engage, is a serious undermining of Mainer's rights. It sends the message quite plainly that the expansion is a done deal, and that the various administrative stages of scrutiny amount to a rubber stamp.

 The Bureau has stated that it believes that this contract will be extended over the summer. But let's be clear, even if that does happen. That means that the State would have agreed to extend this contract well before a final decision on the expansion is made.

 the opportunity to request a public hearing on the application. The opportunity to hold such a hearing the opportunity to appeal any final decision on the application. None of this will have occurred.

 We urge BGS to reconsider expediting this extension of the contract before the landfill expansion process has even gotten off the ground and prioritize Mainer’s rights in protecting their environment and their health.

 Lastly, but equally important. Any extension of the contract must, of course, be accompanied by a major reassessment of how the contract can be amended to increase transparency and environmental protections.

 It is alarming that the Department of Environmental Protection explicitly stated that there should be no extension or renewal of Casella's contract without a full disclosure of all of Casella's individual contracts with their customers. And yet here we are discussing, adding 6 years to the operating services agreement without making any other changes.

 I will reserve my written testimony for deeper discussion of the serious environmental justice issues. This proposed extension poses, which includes, as mentioned often tonight, further burdening of the Penobscot nation with toxic forever chemicals. In short, while we are optimistic, Ld. 2135 will be enacted. We urge Bgs to respond to the concerns of Mainers in our legislators and postpone any extension of the contract until the OSA has been amended to increase both transparency and the protection of our communities and the environment. And until the landfill expansion application has undergone, it's due process. Thank you for your time. I hope you've heard me.

422

01:11:07.560 --> 01:11:09.010

Laura Mitchell: We did. Thank you.

423

01:11:09.430 --> 01:11:13.649

Laura Mitchell: Adam, if you unmute, you can provide your comment.

424

01:11:14.090 --> 01:11:15.220

Adam Nordell: Can you hear me?

425

01:11:15.710 --> 01:11:16.560

Laura Mitchell: Yes.

426

01:11:16.920 --> 01:11:21.430

Adam Nordell: great. Well, thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Adam Nordell.

and I am here speaking as a campaign manager at defend our health.

 Please accept offender help's comments in regard to the possible expansion of Casella's operating services agreement with the State of Maine for Juniper Ridge, landfill.

 We appreciate that landfill management is a complex and nuanced issue, and that the State needs to expand landfill capacity to help manage mains waste.

 However, we have serious concerns regarding Casella's continued management of juniper Ridge Landfill. In recent years the corporation has not been a good partner when it comes to stewarding the environment around the landfill, or when it comes with working with municipalities to manage costs.

after a bipartisan legislature voted resoundingly to ban the land application of sludge. The company used its near monopoly status to extract unjustified tipping fee increases from municipal wastewater districts.

The corporation then sent wastewater districts into turmoil by halting the receipt of sludge at the landfill, engendering a media spectacle that allowed them to pressure the legislature and regain access to out-of-state bulky waste whose disposal offers a lucrative income stream for Casella, while taking a precious space in the publicly owned landfill.

 while other landfill operators in Maine have announced aggressive plans to work on solving the sludge management problem and deal with the severe pfase the PFAS levels in Leachate.

 In partnership with other organizations, Casella continues to send untreated Juniper Ridge leachate to the private wastewater facility at the idol. 9 dragons paper Mill, where it continues.

 where it contributes to elevated levels of pfas entering the Penobscot River near the Penobscot Nations Reservation and Indian Island contaminating the river and the fish that the Penobscot nation depend on

 Casella’s. Subsidiary Company Casella Organics manages the Hawk Ridge Sledge Composting Operation in the unincorporated territory of Unity township near where I live.

 while Maine has banned the composting of sewage sludge Casella organics continues to truck pfas-laden sledge from other states to this disproportionately low income, rural territory, and then sell the contaminated compost to unsuspecting gardeners beyond Maine's boundaries.

 Maine DEP data on PFAS levels and groundwater wells reveal that Casella's Hawk Ridge facility is one of the very worst contaminated sites in the entire State, with PFAS groundwater levels as high as 133,000 parts per trillion. That's 6,650 times beyond main safe drinking water level of 20 parts per trillion.

Numerous neighboring wells have likewise been severely poisoned.

 The fact that the Vermont Based corporation chooses to operate such a dangerous business in a poor main town with no local Government should raise serious concerns about the Company's commitment to the health of its neighbors.

 These are not the actions of an accountable company.

The Bureau of General services needs to take a hard look at the operating service agreement with Casella, and before moving forward with extending that OSA. The State needs to make sure that the landfill expansion application has been fully vetted, subject to all stages of public participation.

 Additionally, there needs to be greater transparency given to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and according to the DEP, there should be a requirement for Casella to disclose to the State all terms of individual agreements between the operator and their customers.

 Finally, all environmental justice impacts must be fully assessed. specifically impact on the neighboring Penobscot Nation who have been dealing with the environmental impacts of this landfill. For decades

 all these criteria should be met before there is any consideration of an expansion of the OSA with Casella.

 Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony.

449

01:15:03.880 --> 01:15:08.320

Laura Mitchell: Thank you, Adam Jackie. I'm gonna elevate you.

450

01:15:08.330 --> 01:15:11.849

Laura Mitchell: If you come off mute, you can provide your comment.

451

01:15:14.030 --> 01:15:18.350

Jackie Elliott she/her: Thank you, Laura. Jackie Elliott. I live in Waterboro.

 I'm going to be honest here and say I'm fighting frustration that this virtual option is not functioning maximally. I appreciate the fact that it was provided after we petitioned for it.

 It's important to have the public accessible to these meetings, and I've been involved in enough of these zoom situations that I'm surprised that at this level of State governance the technology hasn't been mastered better.

 But that being said, I'm old, and I tend to be grumpy. I apologize. I'm also resisting Feeling like this Hearing represents something like a hostage situation, perhaps bordering even on the Stockholm syndrome.

 Casella has called the shots for more than 20 years. and Juniper Ridge Landfill's neighbors have a lived experience of disregarded rights and diminished quality of life.

 impacted citizens have been left with no meaningful influence on outcomes, and that has to change. Why would you extend a contract with 10 years remaining before you do an assessment and determine what the outcomes of that contract have been So far?

 This contract make no mistake is about how people get to live their lives.

 It involves governance accountability, and policy considerations.

 and it should be about people's rights to clean air and clean water, safe places to live, work and play.

 the contract should be structured to protect the interests of those most impacted.

 The State owns the landfill and as a market participant has options to advance the goals of the State's waste management Hierarchy, where land filling is the least desired outcome.

 BGS Is obligated to ensure that the management and operations of Juniper Ridge support the State's waste hierarchy that was stated by Commissioner Loyzim, January 30, first at an ENR. Work session on LD. 2135.

 Casella’s ever-increasing amounts of imported waste have used up JRL's disposal capacity set aside by law for Maine waste, and we are being told we need another expansion. Casella operates the landfill for the purpose of increased profits for their shareholders.

 They show billions of dollars of profit. It's true the State is facing some legitimate crises around waste and materials management. But crisis can present opportunity to rethink and respond.

This is an opportunity to explore regional development of materials, management infrastructure, and programs that prioritize waste diversion and reduction and decrease the risks and truly serve Maine citizens. and those operations would do better under public control and accountability.

 There is a simple reason.

 There is ample reason. I'm sorry, to not extend this contract at this time, and that is what we're asking for and, in fact, it may actually be the time to consider terminating the contract when it expires in 2034.

 Juniper Ridge's neighbors have no proof that last May's fire did not damage the liner or gas collection systems at the landfill. We do know the fire spewed toxic air emissions of dioxins and PFAS that settled out on the water and land.

There is no assurance that the liner system has not been compromised with the construction of the renewable natural gas system that's being constructed. and there are ongoing concerns about sludge management and the risk to landfill stability and the threats that poses to public health and the environment. and still there is no alert system for neighbors to be notified of incidents at the landfill.

 The evidence is just not there to substantiate Casella's claims that all is well, and standards are being met. across the region, Casella has a documented record of multiple infractions and questionable management outcomes for the facilities they operate.

 We need an environmental impact assessment and public benefit, determination of existing and potential impacts of the operations at Juniper Ridge and that assessment must include cumulative impacts and environmental justice obligations for the Penobscot Indian nation, the residents of Old Town and Alton

 environmental justice Considerations are now required by rule for Dep Decisions.

 These impacted folks must be sitting at the decision table with influence. and for starters. Casella must install a full-scale treatment system to bring Leachate to drinking water standards for PFAS chemicals before discharging it to the Penobscot River.

 and that system must have capacity to treat any amount of leachate that is created by the landfill.

 To sum it up, what we are looking for is a 0-waste solution to all of this pollution that we want to cease. and we want environmental justice now.

 and I thank you for your time.

505

01:22:05.940 --> 01:22:17.330

Laura Mitchell: Thank you, Jackie. We were able to. We have been able to project the sound of all of the remote speakers. So, there are still many people in the room, and we're all able to hear you. Thank you for providing comment.

506

01:22:17.470 --> 01:22:21.269

Laura Mitchell: Kat, I'm gonna elevate you, and you can provide your comment.

507

01:22:24.530 --> 01:22:30.110

Kat Taylor - Argyle Twp.: Can you hear me? Yes, it doesn't matter if you can see me. You're not missing anything.

My name is Kat Taylor. I'm a resident and Riverside property owner in Argyle Township, a few miles from Juniper Ridge Landfill, which I see every time I go to town.

 I'm here tonight to oppose the extension of the OSA with Casella.

 Waste management is a highly lucrative business. Casella has commodified waste management at JRL. Instead of benefiting Maine.

in 2022 Casella’s revenues were over 1 billion dollars, up 22% from 2021. Their net income for 2022 was over 53 million, as of February second, 2024. Their net worth is nearly 5 billion, up over 20% in one year.

 It concerns me that people are talking about renegotiating with Casella. Instead, we should be ending our relationship with them. It defies logic that even if the State of Maine took over as operator at JRL or any other State facility, that we wouldn't be successful.

 if all it takes is staffing and resources then current employees at JRL may be kept on with little interruption in services. Resource investment would be replaced quickly by fees.

Let Casella's contract at JRL expire. The remaining capacity is estimated to be exhausted by 2028 at current fill rates.

at the point of exhaustion, Close JRL to new waste and allow Casella to shutter JRL for the remaining years of their contract, and beyond for remediation and maintenance. The original OSA makes Casella responsible for any damage caused by JRL. So, they're motivated to keep it from leaking or catching fire again until at least 2034 at no expense to the State.

 We should take advantage of the next few years to prepare for JRL's eventual closure. We must plan for new facilities and efforts for waste aversion recommended by the Dep. Instead of thinking we can create a contract. Casella’s legions of lawyers and lobbyists won't find a way around.

 We cannot count on the success of MRC's municipal waste solutions or the GRACE facility, since they have years yet to be fully operational, if at all.

and we cannot continue to have contracts with an uncooperative for-profit waste management company that has become the largest and most profitable in New England.

 It's time to let Casella's contract for JRL expire forever.

 We have bought time and leverage, and a way out of a contract that has never done what it was, and what was, and originally intended.

Let's not waste it. Thank you.

523

01:25:26.770 --> 01:25:30.989

Laura Mitchell: Thank you. Are there others that are joining remotely, that would like to provide comment. I'm going to enable you to speak if you would like to.

525

01:25:50.120 --> 01:25:52.670

Laura Mitchell: It appears not.

526

01:25:52.740 --> 01:25:59.320

Laura Mitchell: Are there any people in the room that would now like to provide public comment.

528

01:26:20.590 --> 01:26:47.130

Laura Mitchell: with that. We've reached our time, and I want to thank everyone for being here and providing your public comments. You can expect comments and questions to be responded to in writing by 5 Pm. On April eleventh, and that will be shared on the Bgs website, and with that. Have a good evening, Bill. Is there anything any closing comments? Okay, thank you very much.