



To: Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Commissioner Melanie Loyzim
From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now
Date: July 18, 2024
Re: Casella public benefit determination application for the expansion of Juniper Ridge Landfill

Dear Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Commissioner Melanie Loyzim,

My name is Ezra Sassaman. I am from Bar Harbor and work for Maine Climate Action Now, a coalition made up of eighteen climate justice organizations across the state.

What happens to our waste is important. Maine deserves to have its waste managed by an institution that puts the long-term health of people and planet above short-term financial gains. The way the Juniper Ridge Landfill is currently operated, waste is treated as a commodity that grows shareholder profits.

Over the past years, Casella has accepted consistently large amounts of construction waste from other New England states. It has also been a willing partner to the companies producing that waste, charging fees for every ton of debris buried in the Juniper Ridge Landfill. In this way, its business model encourages practices that unsustainably expand the landfill and actually incentivize the transportation of trash from other states into Maine.

To make matters worse, the construction and demolition debris that make up around two-thirds of new material buried in the landfill are often treated with forever chemicals and other toxins. These chemicals and toxins have been found at alarming levels in the nearby Penobscot River and its fish. The proximity of this landfill to the Penobscot River and Penobscot Nation mean there is a lot at stake and no room for mismanagement from Casella nor from the State of Maine. Expanding the Juniper Ridge Landfill will further exacerbate these harms.

A safe and healthy environment for all people – not the purchase of the most possible waste – must be the priority of Maine and any institutions it contracts with.

For the above stated reasons, we are advocating for you to make a negative public benefit determination. Overall, the State of Maine must do a better job understanding the negative societal and environmental impacts of treating waste as a commodity, especially thinking long-term for the health of future generations.