

From: [Anne Burt](#)
To: [Knuuti, Karen](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Public Benefit Determination Application for Juniper Ridge Landfill (DEP# S-020700-W5-CV-N)
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DEP Solid Waste Project Manager Karen Knuuti,

Dear Commissioner Loyzim,

The proposal to expand the Juniper Ridge Landfill should be denied as we learn more and more about the toxic materials and forever chemicals that make their way to the Penobscot River through leachate discharges and pose significant risk to the health and well-being of Penobscot Nation citizens and others who live along the river. The proposal cannot pass a straight face test when it comes to meeting Maine waste management requirements or protecting vulnerable communities through environmental justice criteria. Sustenance fishing rights are guaranteed through treaties to the Penobscot Nation and research has shown that toxic chemicals such as PFAS, shown to be present in JRL leachate discharged into the river bioaccumulate in the river fish and pose a risk to the health of those who culturally and otherwise count on fish protein in their diet.

The expansion contradicts Maine's Solid Waste Management Hierarchy. It does nothing to increase reduction, reuse, or recycling efforts. Instead, it perpetuates a system that prioritizes disposal over sustainable waste management.

The proposed expansion violates environmental justice legal standards. The landfill has already disproportionately burdened the Penobscot Nation and nearby communities for years, contaminating sacred waters and exposing residents to harmful odors and potential health risks.

Casella's track record raises serious concerns about their ability to safely manage an expanded facility. Past issues with odor control, PFAS contamination, and the 2023 fire are just some examples of the risk of a further expansion.

The proposal does not address long-term waste reduction needs. It's a short-sighted solution that fails to invest in the infrastructure and programs needed for a sustainable waste management future.

I urge you to issue a negative Public Benefit Determination, pursue an independent environmental review of Casella's landfill practices and the cumulative environmental justice impacts, and focus instead on developing zero-waste solutions that protect our environment and communities.

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