

Eleftheriou, Victoria H

From: Ethan Miller
Sent: Sunday, May 02, 2021 10:57 PM
To: Eleftheriou, Victoria H
Subject: Comments on DEP draft license approval of WM landfill in Norridgewock

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Dear Victoria Eleftheriou,

As researcher and teacher of Environmental Studies at Bates College, as a co-founder and coordinator of [Land in Common](#) community land trust, and as a Maine citizen, I am writing to urge the Maine DEP to reject the licensing of Waste Management's expansion of the Crossroads facility in Norridgewock. My comments here apply specifically to the DEP Draft Decision of Approval with Conditions of WMDSM license application #S-010735-WD-YB-N.

I have reviewed the licensing criteria and the applicant's submissions. My research focuses on the intersection of economic development and environmental protection, and I have studied numerous contemporary and historical examples of such proposals and projects in Maine and elsewhere. I am well aware, in particular, of the tendency of State and Federal agencies to give in, under pressures driven by the "need for local economic development" to the approval of projects that end up--over the long run--causing great harm to human and environmental health.

In my view, there is no reason to believe, without the shadow of a doubt, that this landfill expansion will not: pollute one or more of Maine's waters; will not constitute a hazard to health or welfare; will not "unreasonably adversely affect" protected species (e.g. Atlantic Salmon); will not unreasonably affect scenic character; or will not unreasonably adversely affect historic sites. In fact, everything about the nature of the project, its history and its wider context points to the likelihood that one or more of these harms will be created in the near- or long-term. There is nothing about the approval of this project that could reasonably lead to the goals of environmental protection that the DEP has set forth.

Yes, the proposal might create much-needed jobs. Yes, Waste Management has the capability to hire lawyers to say as many of the "right things" as may be needed to justify approval in the name of these jobs. But livelihood is more than jobs, and if we can't figure out how to create jobs in our communities without degrading the health and well being of our people, or land, and our waters, then these jobs don't ultimately mean much. Maine people know this: that's why we live here.

The disposal of our society's ever-growing stream of waste is a collective challenge that we must all face. The need for decent jobs in our communities is all-too-real. But we get nowhere by doing the same old thing over-and-over again: selling ourselves to become the "away" to which people throw things, trying to mitigate the harm as best we can, and then being grateful for getting a few jobs out of the deal.

We must do better than this. A line must be drawn for the sake of current and future generations. *Please be the ones who help draw this line.* Please be ancestors whom your descendants will be proud of.

And one final comment: we are talking about land that was forcibly taken from Wabenaki people who had inhabited and cared for it for ten thousand years. This landfill site is located less than 5 miles from where colonial troops massacred over 80 Abenaki women, children, and men in 1724. The ancestors of the survivors of this massacre are still here, and they are asking us to say NO to this licensing approval. I'm sure you have received some of their comments and testimonies. When I look into my own history (as a settler-descended person seeking to repair past harms), and when I look into my heart, it is clear what is needed: reparation, not further harm.

Please deny this licensing request.

Sincerely,

Ethan Miller

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Ethan Miller, PhD
Program in Environmental Studies
Bates College
Lewiston, ME 04240