



May 4, 2021

We are Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), a coalition of over 300 youth from across the state who are fighting for bold climate action and a just transition to a livable future in Maine. We are writing in opposition of the Norridgewock landfill expansion. This project is not only detrimental to the environment, but also to the people who live in the nearby communities.

Waste Management's Crossroads landfill is currently the only landfill in Maine licensed to take "special waste", including oil sludge, incinerator ash and asbestos among other extremely toxic waste. This new expansion will allow "special waste" to be deposited in close proximity to the Kennebec River, habitat of endangered Atlantic salmon, shortnose sturgeon, and other valuable and beloved species such as alewives, bald eagles, and american eels. Pollution would risk the livelihood of these species. We must avoid river pollution at all costs for these vulnerable species. Additionally, this proposal would destroy 10 acres of wetland. There are other ways to deal with waste that do not include the destruction of valuable habitat, habitat that is diminishing every day.

Most importantly, we are strongly opposed to this project because dumping toxic waste significantly closer to the Norridgewock water supply and near the Kennebec river and its tributaries is an environmental injustice. Much of the waste that will be disposed of at this landfill originates from either out of state or outside provinces that ban items that are categorized as "special waste" because they are so toxic. In 2019, the DEP tested Kennebec River fish below the current landfill, and found high levels of Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), which have been linked to negative health impacts that range from reproductive and developmental, liver and kidney, and immunological effects. The Kennebec river has traditionally been an important sustenance fishing location for the Wabanaki people of Maine, who can no longer safely practice their sovereign right to fish due to pollution and fish population declines. Instead of taking action to prevent further contamination this proposal will only increase toxic waste in the bodies of fish and in the drinking water. This expansion will be a continuation of environmental racism against the Wabanaki people, and a grave injustice to the townspeople of Norridgewock.

The DEP must prove, using the best available science and sufficient evidence, that this landfill will not pollute water or air. We have not seen this evidence and in fact, we've seen evidence that strongly suggests the opposite. We cannot risk further pollution, especially pollution trucked in from out-of-state. This project will undoubtedly impact wetlands habitat, endangered species, and drinking water. Pollution from this landfill will likely harm air quality and cause serious health implications for nearby communities. Because of these reasons, we strongly oppose Waste Management's Crossroads Norridgewock landfill expansion application.

Thank you for taking the time to read our comments, and please keep us informed of future opportunities to provide public comment on this issue.