26 May 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 576, “An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Funding for Landfill Closure Costs.”

This bill amends state law to provide special consideration and extend state financing for the closure of the Old Town landfill, but only at a considerable cost to other municipalities and the state. Under this legislation, eligibility for the Department of Environmental Protection’s landfill closure and remediation cost-share program would be extended to the Old Town landfill. While a windfall for Old Town, increasing the number of landfills eligible for the Department’s cost-share program will reduce the Department’s ability to satisfy our reimbursement obligations to already qualifying municipalities. Although this bill was introduced solely on Old Town’s behalf and does not extend program eligibility to other communities, I cannot help but wonder who will be next. Will we be seeing proposals to extend eligibility to even more communities?

The Department is already obligated to reimburse municipalities for nearly $6 million in closure and remediation costs. Since this program is funded through fees on the disposal of construction and demolition debris, increasing the number of participating municipalities will significantly reduce each municipality’s reimbursement and impose additional interest and debt payment costs on both currently participating municipalities and the Department.

I believe that expanding the eligibility for this successful program is poor public policy that will impose real costs on municipalities and the State, and it could ultimately imperil the successful closure and remediation of these sites. For this reason, I return LD 576 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Paul R. LePage
Governor