

Cheryl Robertson
Orono

To: The Honorable Stacy Brenner, Senate Chair, and The Honorable Ralph Tucker, House Chair, and Distinguished Members of the ENR Committee

In Support of LD 1639: An Act to Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste

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Good morning, Chairs Brenner and Tucker and distinguished members of the ENR Committee. Thank you for your time and consideration in hearing my testimony this morning. My name is Cheryl Robertson, I am an Orono Town Councilor and Chair of our Environment Committee – but I am not testifying on their behalf this morning, rather on behalf of myself and several residents of Orono who also support LD 1639.

As I began to write this testimony it occurred to me that the time and energy everyone has taken, for years now, to get the State to act on a loophole in the rules that allows tons of CDD from out-of-state to be processed in Maine and then reclassified as “in-state” by the mere fact that it had already crossed state borders is inexcusable. It seems to me that this is an issue that should also concern the ENR and the Maine DEP, as well as Maine people, as grassroots groups and NGO’s rally around and actually protect clean, healthy, land and water. That is environmental protection.

Juniper Ridge Landfill is 9 miles from Orono. It is a blight on this area, it is a toxic mess, not the environmental best practice that is touted by Casella. I live in a municipality that is served by the MRC. Its practice is to bypass to JRL when it’s waste processing facilities are down – which has been more the “norm” since Fiberright took over and then took off. One hundred and fifteen Maine municipalities use this facility as a last resort. Bad enough, but this is Maine waste! This is generated in Maine and paid for by Maine taxpayers. When 30% of a state-owned, not a New England-owned landfill is composed of waste from construction debris from out-of-state, people in this area are then subjected to expansion requests and subsequently more acres granted becomes a heavier and more toxic mess with JRL leachate ending up in our streams and rivers. This is an inescapable consequence – and waste management people know that.

I support LD 1639 for the following reasons:

- 1) It would limit the tonnage that a Maine waste processing facility can send to JRL to be no more than what they take from original Maine sources;
- 2) Out-of-state waste would no longer be able to be camouflaged as Maine-generated
- 3) It would clarify that no placement of waste in a landfill counts toward the 50% recycling standard that a solid waste processing facility must meet.
- 4) Require Maine’s solid waste processing facilities that take out-of-state waste to process do the right thing for our environment by recycling more of the material they receive, or by processing more waste originally generated by Maine people than they import from out of state.

This dangerous loophole is filling up JRL and it’s not about being environmentally friendly, nor are we “lucky” to have this is our backyard. It’s a travesty, it’s devastating our environment and this is a shared responsibility - not a grassroots "problem."

As a people, Maine leads the nation in many ways. Let’s take a stand and save our state, and not let it become the dumping ground for New England. And while we’re at it, let’s also find a way to not generate so much waste, period. It would be worth our time and effort to work together, not to continue to struggle against policy that is part of the problem, not the solution.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I look forward to seeing an “ought to pass” in your review and analysis of LD 1639.

Cheryl Robertson, Ed.D