**“Do the Right Thing” NHDES – Deny this Unneeded, Unwanted, Unwise, and Inappropriately Sited Wetlands Permit**

Good afternoon. My name is Wayne Morrison, along with and through my wife Nancy, we share a proud heritage spanning 7 generations of family living in and loving the area now threatened by this “God Awful” landfill. I am also a board member with North Country Alliance for Balanced Change (NCABC).

NCABC joins today’s rally to express our strong opposition to the proposed mega landfill development sited so dangerously and irresponsibly close to Forest Lake State Park, Forest Lake and the Ammonoosuc River.

Today, I will address three topics; the false premise that NH needs more landfill capacity, the inadequacy of the wetlands permit application and the growing threat that leachate transport and processing poses throughout the state.

Here is the narrative behind the purported need for a 137 acre “greenfield” landfill in Dalton. The developer insists that NH has a **rapidly growing trash generation problem and a looming landfill capacity crisis**. This is the justification Casella Waste Systems has made for the planned destruction of 17 acres of wetlands, 5 vernal pools, the clear cutting of 160 acres of forest and all the associated health, environmental and safety risks that will follow.

So what are the facts?

New Hampshire clearly does **not** have a rapidly growing trash problem. The annual amount of trash generated in NH, like the state’s population, is flat to growing ever so slightly – in the 1-2% range. Hardly a rate that would tax NH’s existing landfill capacity!

However, the importing of “out of state trash” (primarily from private developers like Casella) has been growing at an annual rate closer to 8-9% and now results in more out of state trash being buried in NH’s landfills than in state trash! Casella’s proposed Granite State Landfill in Dalton projects up to 49% of the solid waste buried at the site to come from out of state (mostly from Massachusetts) **further** **institutionalizing** this despicable practice. To be clear, Casella is requesting a wetlands permit from DES, in large measure, to bury out of state trash at the foot of the White Mountains, providing financial benefit to Casella, but **no public benefit** to the citizens of NH. The risks and impacts will be felt for decades to come leaving future generations to ask: **How did this happen? Who let this happen?**

Permitted and pending capacity at the Mount Carberry Landfill and the Turnkey Landfill is sufficient through 2034, even with continued rates of out of state trash and no substantive progress in waste stream reduction. With planned expansion, Mount Carberry can expect ample capacity through 2049. **This window provides more than sufficient time for DES and the legislature to update and implement the state’s solid waste plan which has laid idle since 2003.**

NH’s waste management plan cannot be left to out of state, for profit, private developers whose financial interests seldom align with the best interests of the people of NH. We need only look to our neighboring states of Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts who are moving rapidly to address these same issues. We do not want to be left behind. We do not want to be left holding the proverbial “landfill bag”. **Most assuredly, we do not want to become New England’s Dumping Ground!**

Turning to the wetlands permit application – the critiques of that application have been extensive and damning. They document a failure to credibly study alternative sites with less wetlands impact, omissions of groundwater and bedrock flow studies, unwillingness to address the impacts of construction and operation on the site’s wetlands, and the refusal to allow the local Conservation Commission to study the site during the growing season. Basic habitat studies are missing and the lack of proper assessments prevents proper mitigation plans from being presented. This is only a sample of the information that is missing, the list goes on.

These objections to the project remain even as the permit decision has been inexplicably delayed. We would fully expect such a deficient application to simply be denied a permit. Frankly, we are astounded and our confidence shaken by DES’ suggestion that Casella “redo” the application in diminished form, postponing a decision to as late as December of 2022. **We are left wondering what kind of oversight agency asks for less information and a smaller view of the planned project in order to make a more “informed and intelligent decision” on such an impactful and irreversible course of action with ramifications for decades to come? What gives?**

Last, let’s look at the threats of living with leachate, the highly toxic juice that drains from landfills. This too is a wetlands protection and public health issue. The proposed Dalton facility will generate tens of thousands of gallons of leachate daily that must be stored, pumped and transported by tanker trucks. Several tankers, each carrying over 7,000 gallons of leachate, will pass near our wetlands, rivers, lakes and aquifers almost every day, traveling an average of 90 miles, primarily to the Waste Water Treatment facility right here in Concord. The leachate will be processed and the effluent will be released into the Merrimack River—a drinking water supply for the Nashua area and several towns in Massachusetts and also an important recreational destination.

We have learned in recent years that leachate contains tremendously harmful “forever chemicals” like PFAS which are not removed in traditional water treatment plants. So these powerful toxins are ultimately released directly into our rivers even though they are known to cause tremendous harm to public health. Disposing of millions of tons of trash in the north and moving leachate as we do, poses a grave threat to communities and waters all along the travel route. The dangers move from north to south, through spills, accidents and even intentional releases into drinking water. **Clearly, this is yet another red flag against siting a huge, unneeded commercial dump in NH!**

**“The mission statement of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services is to help sustain a high quality of life for all citizens by protecting and restoring the environment and public health in New Hampshire. The protection and wise management of the state’s environment are the main goals of the agency.”**

We applaud DES’ mission statement – but they are only hollow words if the agency doesn’t actually live them! Now is the time for DES to **“Stand Up for NH”** and demonstrate the courage to fulfill that mission. **This project is unwanted, unwise and inappropriately sited.** **We respectfully request that DES “Do the Right Thing” and DENY this unneeded wetlands permit!**

Thank you.

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