

Casella requests extension on Dalton landfill permitting process as opponents work on new bill

By: [Amanda Gokee](#) - September 1, 2021 4:02 pm



Opponents of the Dalton landfill proposal continue to work on legislation. (Amanda Gokee | New Hampshire Bulletin)

The fight over the contentious proposal to put a landfill next to Forest Lake State Park in Dalton is far from over.

Last week, New Hampshire state regulators asked Casella to submit an amendment to the wetlands permit application. The state is asking Casella to submit information about how wetlands would be impacted during the first phase of the project only, in keeping with the timeframe in the company's application for a solid waste permit. Currently, the permit application includes impacts during all three phases of the project. In an Aug. 26 letter to Casella, the state requests the amendment "in order to align the proposed areas of impact between the Solid Waste application and the Wetlands application."

The state requested more information as well, including a permit for alteration of terrain "to address land disturbance, stormwater management, flood storage, and wildlife and habitat impacts," in addition to a federal wetlands permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a water quality certification for that federal permit, which is issued by the state.

The letter, signed by Rene Pelletier, the assistant director of the water division, said the state needs to review that information at the same time as the wetlands permit.

On Aug. 27, Casella engineer John Gay responded, saying the company would submit the materials by Dec. 15, 2021. Gay requested an extension on the department's review of the permit, asking for a decision by Dec. 31, 2022.

Jon Swan, the founder of Save Forest Lake, one of the organizations leading opposition to the proposed landfill, criticized the amendment process and urged state regulators to render a decision on the application as it currently stands.

The delay would, however, give more time for legislation that could potentially impact how and where landfills are sited in the state. That's something legislators have been meeting to discuss in the North Country, as they work on drafting a bill that would be introduced in the upcoming session, according to Rep. Edith Tucker, a Randolph Democrat.

Tucker said Republican Sen. Erin Hennessey is a "lead member" of the group and that she has been helping them understand and address issues that arose in the Senate last session, where a bill to create a buffer between state parks and landfills was voted down.

“Senators seemed to feel that House Bill 177 wasn’t sufficiently science-based,” Tucker said. That’s something the group is trying to address in the legislation they are drafting now. Other legislators working on the draft include Reps. Linda Massimilla, a Littleton Democrat, and Troy Merner, a Lancaster Republican.

The impact of blasting on water flow and air pollution are two areas that Tucker’s constituents are concerned about. Members of the House of Representatives can file legislative service requests for future bills during one week this month, from Sept. 13-17.

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