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Casella Waste Systems testifies to sludge issues

Matthew Jaroncyk

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AUGUSTA -- "The capacity for bio solids has not been developed by any individual community or state in an organized fashion."

State lawmakers were briefed by members of Casella Waste Systems and Juniper Ridge Landfill about the issues sludge companies across Maine are facing, including price hikes, delays in pickups and environment issues.

"We need actually more landfill space per ton of municipal bio solids to successfully stabilize them structurally in the landfill," said Patrick Ellis, Director of Organics for Casella Waste Systems.

Members of the environment and natural resources committee hope to figure out the best way to deal with the situation before it gets worse.

"A lot of what I've listened to, it's a direct result of bulking. You don't have the bulking materials, so it's forcing so many different options," said Representative Mike Soboleski, who represents portions of Franklin and Somerset Counties.

Casella claims the sludge crisis occurred when the legislature passed L.D. 911 and L.D. 1639, two environmental laws banning the spread of sludge after some tested positive for high rates of PFAS. However, Soboleski pushed back.

"1911 was a necessary legislation. We can't knock it. We had to have it. We couldn't keep putting that stuff on the ground, so that was necessary," said Soboleski.

As the two sides continue to work towards a resolution, Wayne Boyd, general manager of the Juniper Ridge Landfill, says both organizations are open to exploring using alternative materials such as wood chips, gravel and chipped railroad ties to bulk sludge.

"The thing about a landfill is there so many pieces to the puzzle, but yes we would certainly sit and talk if all the boxes are checked. We're interested," said Boyd.

Matthew Jaroncyk

Reporter

Matthew Jaroncyk joined the ABC 7 and Fox 22 news team in May 2022. He is a graduate of Quinnipiac University where he majored in Journalism. While at Quinnipiac, Matthew was part of the Q30 Television, the school's student-run television station, covering unique and important stories across the Greater Hamden area as an Assistant Producer. Matthew is from North Reading, Massachusetts, where he is a die-hard sports fan and loves creating memorable moments when possible. If you recognize him in public, don't be afraid to come up to him and say hello! He's excited to explore the area and connect with the public whenever possible. If you have a story idea, do not hesitate to reach out to Matthew at mjaroncyk@wvii.com or on Twitter [@matthewjaroncyk](https://twitter.com/matthewjaroncyk).