

LOCAL NEWS

Casella seeks extension of management term of Juniper Ridge Landfill

While critics accuse the company of mismanaging Juniper Ridge, Casella representatives point to a clean track record at the state-owned site.



Author: Donovan Lynch

Published: 8:43 PM EST January 22, 2024

Updated: 8:43 PM EST January 22, 2024



ALTON, Maine — The operators of Maine's largest landfill are seeking a six-year extension to their management of the facility, drawing scrutiny from locals and environmental activists.

Casella Waste Systems runs [Juniper Ridge Landfill](#), a sprawling complex owned by the state in Penobscot County. It saw widespread attention last year when an excess of toxic sludge at the site led to concerns over whether the landfill would remain stable.

After Governor Janet Mills signed an emergency bill last summer to loosen restrictions on out-of-state waste, Casella found success using processed construction debris from outside of Maine to bulk up the sludge. Locals fear if this continues it will inhibit the use of the landfill by future generations of Mainers.

"They are filling that resource just about as fast as they can," Peter Crockett, a retired pipe fitter from Argyle Township said Monday. "I believe there's a lot of stuff that doesn't belong in there."

Though the sludge emergency has passed, a spokesperson for Casella says the company still relies on out-of-state construction waste to control the landfill.

Activists fighting against Casella’s contract extension over Juniper Ridge say this method is unnecessary.

"We believe that there's enough waste in Maine we can use to create landfill stability than having to truck in out-of-state waste to do so," Dana Colihan, co-executive director of the firm Slingshot, said Monday.

But the company insists the strategies it uses to stabilize Juniper Ridge are exactly why a contract extension is in order.

Related Articles

[Maine Department of Environmental Protection orders permanent closure of Bucksport landfill](#)

[PERC stops all operations with 8,000 tons of waste in holding](#)

[Trash talk: Towns’ garbage in Maine landfills is up nearly 50 percent](#)

"Extending the operating service agreement is a necessity at this time to make sure Maine has the ability to manage its waste," Jeff Weld, a representative from Casella, added.

Right now, Casella has 10 years left in its agreement with the state. If granted the six-year extension, the company would oversee Juniper Ridge until 2040.

So far, a spokesperson for the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services says Casella has honored its current operating agreement.

The public will have a chance to weigh in on the proposed six-year extension to Casella’s contract at a public hearing in Brewer this Thursday.

Don't miss these NEWS CENTER Maine stories

Veteran-led nonprofit working to help clean up hardest-hit areas in Maine after ...



For the latest breaking news, weather, and traffic alerts, download the NEWS CENTER Maine mobile app.