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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OP-ED TOP STORY

LETTER: Former director urges landfill protection



By **martha**

DEC 26, 2023



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Urging the Preservation of Madison County's Landfill Resource

To the editor:

I've recently engaged with various individuals, including former and current members of the Madison County Board of Supervisors, as well as concerned citizens, regarding the proposed public-private partnership involving Casella Waste Systems, Inc., for the operation of the Madison County Landfill.

Having shared my perspectives and pertinent information with the Madison County Board of Supervisors, I'm pleased that the decision regarding the partnership has been prudently postponed until after Jan. 1, 2024. This delay will allow the newly elected board to conduct a thorough assessment of all available options.

The Cornerstone study, presented to the Madison County Board of Supervisors, notably underscores the unparalleled value inherent in our county's landfill. This resource offers an estimated service life of more than a century, prompting a critical question: Why consider relinquishing this invaluable asset to a private entity for substantial profit when its purpose was originally to serve the needs of all communities within Madison County?

The study's insights on the solid waste industry's trends in New York state emphasize the declining disposal capacity and the limited capability for expansion. With Madison County possessing one of the few operational municipal solid waste landfills in the state, with significant allowable future capacity, it's evident that the county harbors a crucial and scarce resource.



I strongly believe that alternative avenues exist for securing necessary tonnage and funds through direct arrangements with other municipalities or brokers, potentially stabilizing operations financially for the long term. This approach would avoid the drastic reduction of the landfill’s service life, as proposed in the 25-year contract with Casella Waste Systems, which would shorten the life expectancy to a mere 25 years or less.

While acknowledging the need for out-of-county waste allocation, the proposed 25-year contract, allocating 75 years’ worth of space, seems disproportionate to our county’s actual needs and the inherent value of this resource, as emphasized in the Cornerstone report and Casella’s proposal.

The Cornerstone study unequivocally affirms Madison County’s ownership of an exceptionally valuable asset. Therefore, I implore the new Madison County Board of Supervisors to meticulously reconsider any decision that compromises this invaluable resource for future generations of Madison County.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I extend my best wishes to the Board in their decision-making process.

James A. Zecca, former director of Madison County Department of Solid Waste and Sanitation and concerned grandfather, Utica



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