



February 18, 2020

Re: The State of Solid Waste and Recycling in New Hampshire

Dear Esteemed Senators and Representatives of New Hampshire:

Casella Waste Systems is a regional solid waste resource management company serving more than 50,000 households and 5,500 businesses across 150 towns and cities in New Hampshire through collection, transfer, recycling, and waste disposal operations. We are proud to directly employ more than 175 people across our New Hampshire operations, providing an annual payroll that exceeds \$10 million.

In 2019 the North Country Environmental Services (NCES) landfill in Bethlehem safely and securely disposed of more than 200,000 tons of waste generated by New Hampshire residents, businesses, and municipalities, making NCES the leading disposal site for New Hampshire waste. More than 70 percent of the municipal solid waste accepted by NCES in 2019 (excluding cover material and special waste) originated in New Hampshire and in 2020 that projection is expected to exceed 80 percent, again leading the state. In addition to our disposal operation, we also kept more than 40,000 tons of New Hampshire waste from going into NCES through our Recycling and Organics operations. We have spent the last four decades growing from a single-truck operation to a leader in the northeast in creating economically and environmentally sustainable solutions that seek to find a higher and better use for our waste.

We are also acutely aware of an active misinformation campaign designed to denigrate our company and the people of New Hampshire whom we employ that has likely reached your inbox at some point over the past year.

It is with this in mind that we offer this letter. As the legislature is called upon to consider changes to solid waste policy, it is critical that senators and representatives understand the broader perspective in which these changes would take place. For decades, State government has been responsible for ensuring that all of New Hampshire's waste is managed and, if necessary, disposed of in an environmentally sound manner. One of the principal drivers of successful waste management is the affordability of disposal. The State has historically relied upon price competition to keep disposal costs low and regional disposal facilities to minimize transportation costs. In this letter and its enclosures, we hope to give you a better idea of the role our company plays in maintaining safe, economical waste management for New Hampshire citizens.

The work completed by the Recycling and Solid Waste Management Study Committee (HB 617), led by Representative Karen Ebel, has produced several bills up for consideration this session. We applaud the efforts of the committee to develop an accurate understanding of New Hampshire's waste management system and its inclusion of a diverse group of people seeking real solutions to New Hampshire's disposal capacity challenge which is compounded by a lack of in-state recycling infrastructure. We have already submitted testimony on two of these bills (SB 591 and SB 629) this month and will soon begin discussions with the governor and legislative leadership about how we can develop additional recycling infrastructure in New Hampshire.

In addition to the challenges posed by shrinking landfill capacity, we are seeing New Hampshire municipalities abandon their recycling programs due to transportation costs, much of which could be controlled by a public-private partnership investment in processing infrastructure in New Hampshire. And, while the well-documented disruption to the fiber and mixed paper recycling markets caused by China's "National Sword" has led many to question the future of recycling, at Casella we have recently invested \$9 million in new sorting infrastructure to ensure our programs remain sustainable.

Abandoning recycling programs at this time, with new domestic fiber and mixed paper markets scheduled to be online in 18-24 months, would take municipalities backwards on their journey to reduce the amount of waste they send to landfill. With the advent of single stream recycling we have seen a significant increase in recycling rates. This was a shift in the industry that has proven successful, although not without its own challenges. Now, much like the implementation of single-stream recycling, we view the new reality not as the end of the industry, but as the latest in its metamorphosis.

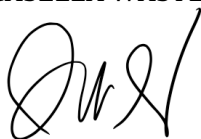
New infrastructure and domestic markets, combined with shared responsibility by producers, consumers, and companies like Casella all play a vital role in moving our modern society along the right path to waste reduction. At the same time, we cannot altogether stop permitting new landfill capacity to come online. Landfills are a bridge to help us collectively achieve our future recycling goals and stability in available capacity will allow municipalities and businesses to accurately plan and budget for the future.

Unfortunately, there are two bills (HB1319 and HB1422) now in committee that would disrupt the state's current waste management system and substantially increase the disposal costs each of your constituents pays. They are targeted at a new disposal facility we propose to develop on industrial property in Dalton, but they would do so without regard for the effect this would have on the 150 New Hampshire towns that now use our Bethlehem facility, the availability of disposal capacity across the state, the price New Hampshire residents will pay for waste disposal, or the fact that they would also prevent development of new disposal capacity at any of the state's three commercial landfills. New Hampshire already faces an imminent disposal crisis, and these two bills would just accelerate and worsen that crisis.

We are proud to stand alongside the people of New Hampshire in establishing the goals and infrastructure for this journey, but none of us can afford to take steps backward.

As you review the attached materials, please do not hesitate to reach out to me for further discussion or clarification. I am happy to be the conduit that connects you to the best answers at any time throughout the process.

Sincerely,
CASELLA WASTE SYSTEMS, INC.



Jeff Weld
Director of Community Engagement