



Uncategorized

Mass. DEP fines Casella Waste \$18,000

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March 22, 2005 8:20 am

A Maine landfill owner and operator has been fined \$18,000 by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for violating state regulations there.

Casella Waste Systems Inc., the same company that owns and operates the Pine Tree Landfill in Hampden and that has been chosen by the state to run the West Old Town Landfill, was fined earlier this month for disposing of unacceptable waste at the Hardwick, Mass., landfill.

It's the second time this month that Casella has been penalized for violations at its facilities in another state. Casella had its permit to operate a Pennsylvania

transfer station revoked earlier this month because of repeated violations.

Maine state officials have said they are talking with the company to ensure that regulations in Maine are followed.

“I’m having conversations with Casella,” George MacDonald, waste management and recycling program manager with the Maine State Planning Office, said last week.

“I’m interested in making sure they comply” with Maine regulations, MacDonald said.

Casella purchased the Hardwick landfill from the Roach family in March 2003.

While performing an inspection of the landfill in September 2004, Massachusetts DEP personnel observed the disposal of unacceptable waste, including automobile tires and white goods, within the new operating cell of the landfill.

Storm water control and odor violations also were noted during the inspection.

The facility subsequently has been forced to work to reduce the odor level at the site, as well as install a gas collection system.

The cost of these additions is above and beyond the monetary fine issued by the Massachusetts DEP.

“DEP and the landfill operator have reached a settlement agreement regarding this site to improve operating practices and overall management,” Martin Suuberg, director of the DEP’s Central Regional Office in Worcester, Mass., said in a recent press release.

“As far as I know, this is the only violation that they’ve been connected to at this site,” Edmund Colletta, Massachusetts DEP spokesman, said Monday.

He noted that Casella has been cited in the past for violations at other sites in the state.

A similar system for odor control and gas collection already exists at the Hampden site and is slated to be installed at the West Old Town Landfill.

The Pennsylvania DEP earlier this month cited the company for more than 100 violations in the last 10 years at its Wellsboro, Pa., transfer station.

All waste had to be removed from the site by March 18 and operations had to cease, according to the Pennsylvania DEP.

In Maine, state officials say they aren't having any problems with Casella's operations.

"Nothing has caused me to question what's going on in Maine," MacDonald said.

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