

Ontario County landfill in Seneca to close: What to know



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The Ontario County Board of Supervisors voted to end operations at the county landfill in Seneca.

In a 20-to-one vote, the board decided to close down the landfill on Dec. 31, 2028, when the county's 25-year Operation, Management and Lease agreement with Casella Waste Services of Ontario expires.

In September, the BOS released a comprehensive landfill study with data and research on potential outcomes for the landfill to help them decide on its future. The study included historical and current landfill operational data, processes and potential costs if it closed, and four potential waste management scenarios. In September, the BOS also held multiple community meetings to inform the community of the study's findings and receive feedback.

Based on the findings and public input, the Ontario County Planning & Environmental Quality Committee recommended closing the landfill and sent it to the board for a vote, which was approved at the Dec. 5 meeting. The board's second resolution stated that they would continue to work with Casella for the remainder of the agreement, as Casella will begin the closure and post-closure monitoring obligations stated in the agreement.

This 389-acre landfill and Materials Recovery Facility is located on State Routes 5 & 20 in the Town of Seneca and has been in operation since 1974. The county entered a lease agreement for the landfill with Casella in 2004. It currently accepts close to 700,000 tons of material annually, according to Ontario County.

Yvonne Taylor, the vice president of Seneca Lake Guardian, a non-profit dedicated to preserving and protecting the Finger Lakes and its surrounding communities, released a statement following the board's decision to close down landfill operations.

She wrote, "We applaud the strong and decisive leadership the Ontario County Board of Supervisors demonstrated by overwhelmingly voting to cease operations at their county's landfill in 2028, when the contract with its operator expires. As we celebrate this action we must make one thing abundantly clear: the decision to close the Ontario County Landfill will have minimal impact on New York's waste management system. It will not create further dependence on the Seneca Meadows Landfill. The Finger Lakes region has a rich history of leadership- from Innovators, Abolitionists, Suffragists, Activists, Inventors, Writers and Internationally Recognized Wine producers. Some of the most impactful moments in American history over the past few centuries have been made in the Finger Lakes, and we must continue this tradition by leading New York toward a zero-waste, circular economy that uses landfills as a last resort. The solutions exist; let's build the political capital to do this by closing New York's largest landfill, Seneca Meadows, next. History can continue to be made in the Finger Lakes, and together, we can achieve a healthier future for New York."