

Ayotte, Opponents Celebrate as Casella Withdraws Landfill Permit, But Company Insists Dalton Plan Isn't Over

By  Nancy West 13 hours ago



Residents worry that a proposed landfill in Dalton will be harmful to nearby Forest Lake State Park. (Thomas Caldwell Photo)

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While Gov. Kelly Ayotte and opponents celebrated Casella's withdrawal of an application for a wetlands permit key to a proposed landfill near Forest Lake State Park in Dalton, the company indicated that might be premature.

"We withdrew the permit application to ensure that the review process is properly aligned with the solid waste permit that is currently under appeal. Proceeding in this manner allows the relevant regulatory considerations to be addressed in a coordinated and consistent way, rather than in parallel tracks that could create confusion or inefficiency," said Casella spokesman Jeff Weld.

Ayotte said in a press release: "This is a win for our North Country and protecting New Hampshire's outdoors. I have said from day one that we would not let Forest Lake become a dumping ground for out-of-state trash, and the withdrawal of this permit application is an important step in ensuring this beautiful area of our state remains pristine for future generations to enjoy.

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"I look forward to signing the law the Legislature sent to my desk to ensure we protect our entire state and give communities like Dalton a voice in the siting process for any future landfill proposal. I will never stop fighting to protect New Hampshire's natural beauty and our quality of life," Ayotte said.

Republican state Sen. David Rochefort of Lancaster said: "When I first raised the Dalton landfill issue to Governor Ayotte before she was elected, she was immediately on board with stopping Forest Lake State Park from becoming a dumping ground for out-of-state trash.

"The Governor was in the trenches with us every step of the way to save Forest Lake and deliver on legislation that gives our communities a say in the landfill siting process," Rochefort said.

Wayne Morrison, President of the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change, said: "This second withdrawal by Casella of the Wetland's Application is indicative of a deeply flawed and problematic permit application from its very inception.

“NCABC was founded by a group of concerned citizens working to ensure that a proposed drag strip in Dalton would not damage fragile wetlands around Alder Brook and pollute the Ammonoosuc River watershed and we have continued fighting for the North Country and protecting our Forest Lake by ensuring that a landfill would not be placed alongside those pristine waters. None of this would have been possible without the strong support of Governor Ayotte and the Legislature,” he said.

Ayotte also led the effort to pass a [law](#) that gives local communities a say in the landfill siting process and said she will sign the bill as soon as it reaches her desk.

Weld said the proposed development of GSL is driven by the demonstrated need for disposal capacity to serve customers and businesses in more than 200 New Hampshire communities currently relying on the North Country Environmental Services (NCES) Landfill in Bethlehem, which is expected to cease operations in 2027.

“If additional disposal capacity is not permitted, those communities will need to transport waste to other facilities, which could result in increased transportation costs and reduced competition in the marketplace. This will impact everyone from residents and local businesses to small haulers and contractors who rely on local disposal capacity for operating their business,” he said.