

Proposed Dalton Landfill Denied by DES

By PAULA TRACY, InDepthNH.org 14 hours ago



Wayne D. King photo

Jon Swan, who has fought the proposed landfill, is pictured at Forest Lake in this file photo

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DALTON – A controversial proposal to build a landfill close to a North Country lake and state park has been denied by the state Department of Environmental Services, though it can be appealed within 30 days.

In an April 3 to Toni King, regional environmental and compliance manager for Granite State Landfill LLC (Casella Waste Systems) of Rutland Vermont, the state Department of Environmental Services informed that the standard permit application for the project at Forest Lake at 172 Douglas Drive, Dalton was denied.

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Michael J. Wimsatt, P.G., director of the Waste Management Division for DES wrote that the denial was based on dormancy of the application, initially received October 31, 2023.

This comes as good news to the Save Forest Lake Association and the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change. Both include a number of individuals who have lobbied the governor to oppose the project.

In an email sent out to supporters this week, they cited Wimsatt's letter and noted that the state needs to now focus on issues related to the Bethlehem closing landfill.

Gov. Kelly Ayotte, the new Republican governor, said she would stay outside of the permitting process with the Casella project. But she said there was “no way” on her watch that the project would proceed.

She included remarks in her inaugural address.

In a meeting with the press recently, she said she is concerned about out-of-state waste ending up in New Hampshire.

District 1 Executive Councilor Joe Kenney, R-Wakefield, said Friday that “there is a lot of resistance there,” in terms of public opposition to the project in Dalton.

But he noted the state faces a whole lot of questions for future needs for landfills across New Hampshire.

“It’s only going to get worse,” he said. “We need a better solid waste strategic plan.”

Officials for Casella could not be immediately reached for comment.

There are a number of bills in the legislature related to landfills and suspending any new landfills and testing and monitoring of leachate, which are included in the House version of the state budget.

In his denial, Wimsatt noted: “The information submitted does not include a site report that demonstrates that the location of the proposed facility complies with all applicable siting requirements and that the site is a suitable location for the proposed facility as required by Env-Sw 314.03(a)(5).”

He also noted, “The information submitted also does not include copies of the documents that demonstrate that the applicant and their successors and assigns will have a legal right for the use of the properties as proposed in the application as required by Env-Sw 314.03(a)(3).”

It cites a separate submittal dated February 27, 2025, was provided under separate cover by the law firm of Cleveland, Waters and Bass.

“NHDES received this document on February 27, 2025. While the applicant provided a short memorandum and an “interpolated agreement” discussing the legal agreements, no copies of such agreements were provided as required by Env-Sw 314.03(a)(3). Therefore, it does not satisfy application requirements,” it reads.

Copies of the letter were sent to the Dalton Select Board along with their counterparts in Bethlehem, Littleton, Whitefield along with organizations such as the Ammonoosuc River LAC, NH Fish & Game, Nongame & Endangered Species, NH Div. of Forests & Lands, Natural Heritage Bureau and others.