

NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER

Casella Waste withdraws wetland permit for controversial Dalton landfill



The North Country Environmental Services landfill in Bethlehem, which Casella Wast... ▲

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Vermont-based Casella Waste Systems withdrew a wetland permit application to build a landfill near Forest Lake State Park in Dalton, but vows to continue to fight to develop the site.

A letter from the company dated June 15 to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services says it reserves all rights with respect to the project.

Gov. Kelly Ayotte in a statement last week called the withdrawal a win for “our North Country” and protecting New Hampshire outdoors.

Casella in its own statement said it withdrew the permit application “to ensure that the review process is properly aligned with the solid waste permit that is currently under appeal.”

Granite State Landfill, a subsidiary of Casella, filed a lawsuit against the state Department of Environmental Services (DES) last year.

“We withdrew the permit application to ensure that the review process is properly aligned with the solid waste permit that is currently under appeal,” Jeff Weld, vice president of communications for Casella, said in the statement. “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.”

Ayotte said she will not allow Forest Lake State Park to become a dumping ground for out-of-state trash. She plans to sign legislation that creates a new landfill-siting process that effectively prevents any new dump from getting permitted until at least July 1, 2027.

The application filed in October 2023 was denied, being considered “dormant.” Casella says DES denied its application on grounds that exceed the department’s statutory authority. DES, however, says its decision is consistent with state law on rulemaking authority.

Wayne Morrison, president of the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change, said the second withdrawal of the wetland permit application “is indicative of a deeply flawed and problematic permit application from its very inception.”

Weld said the proposed Granite State Landfill is driven by the fact that customers in more than 200 New Hampshire communities rely on the landfill in Bethlehem, which is expected to close next year.

“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,” his statement said. “This will impact everyone from residents and local businesses to small haulers and contractors who rely on local disposal capacity for operating their business.”

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