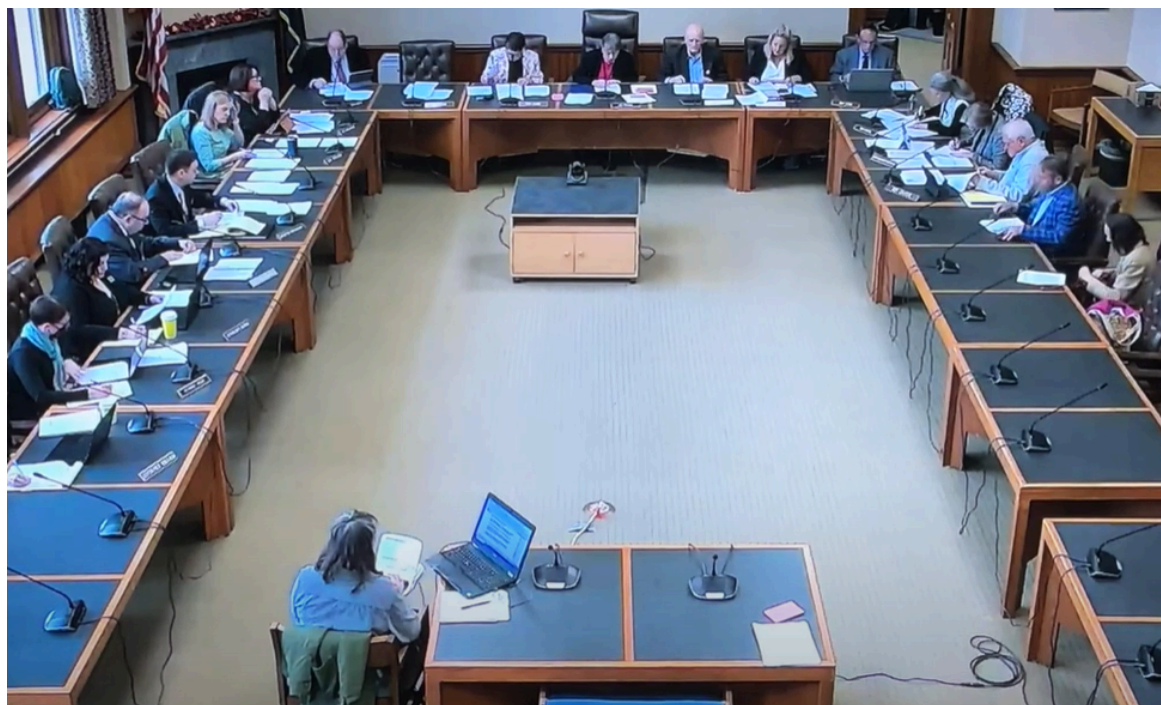


BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Citing Overwhelming Public Comment, Panel Objects to Landfill Rule Changes for Now

By PAULA TRACY, InDepthNH.org 16 hours ago



Screenshot

The Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules voted unanimously Thursday on a preliminary objection to solid waste rule changes.

By PAULA TRACY, InDepthNH.org

CONCORD – After receiving hundreds of pages of documents and concerns about future landfill siting, a state committee has temporarily rejected proposed solid waste rules and asked the Department of Environmental Services to come back in December with revisions and explanations for how these changes are an improvement.

Opponents feel they don't go far enough to protect the land and people from migrating liquid and potentially toxic leachate, including PFAS.

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The Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules voted unanimously Thursday on a preliminary objection to the rule changes.

State Rep. Erica Layon, R-Derry, asked for a preliminary objection to the solid waste rules DES was seeking.

State Sen. Rebecca Whitley, D-Hopkinton, asked if the committee would like to hear from opponents who had packed the hearing.

State Rep. Carol McGuire, R-Epsom, who chairs the committee, indicated she was going to support Layon's position and did not take testimony.

McGuire said she was hesitant to do so but noted the sheer volume of input and technical nature made her support a pause for better clarification.

She noted that there are several landfill proposals including one by Casella Waste Systems of Vermont to build a second landfill in the north country, this one in Dalton that could be impacted, and she did not want decisions based on old rules which are more permissive. The current landfill Casella has is in Bethlehem.

"It's possible that the landfills in question might be approved on the 10-year-old rules rather than the new rules that are more protective and I don't believe that's what anybody wants. So. These rules are much more protective, and it didn't seem to me that many of the commenters who came back and complained about the rule really understood what the... how the comments were actually addressed.

"There is also the issue that these rules are much more protective than the existing rules which have been extended for as long as we are in rulemaking and are what is now currently being used to evaluate I believe its two landfill applications. And if we drag this out any much further it is possible that the landfills in question might be approved on the 10-year-old rules rather than the new rules which are more protective. And I don't believe that is what anybody wants. So I am going to support the objection and hope the agency can come back with some more accessible information," she said.