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Petition drive underway opposing soil monofill at Dummer Yard

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Barbara Tetreault

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BERLIN — A petition drive is underway opposing a proposed soil monofill at the Dummer Yard landfill.

LFOD Northwoods LLC., has called for creating a soil disposal facility at Dummer Yard that would accept contaminated soil from across New England. Revenue from the monofill would be used to remediate the Dummer Yard landfill off Hutchins Street.

But at a public hearing on the proposal last month, many residents near the landfill expressed concern about truck traffic, dust, environmental issues, and the impact on property values that the addition of a soil disposal facility would create.

Rachel Fillion, a resident of Derrah Street, is actively collecting signatures for the petition. She said her neighborhood already deals with the truck traffic and noise from the Androscoggin Valley Regional Refuse Disposal District's Mount Carberry Landfill. For years, she said they dealt with an odor from the landfill but the district has eliminated the smell.

Fillion said at the March meeting LFOD Northwoods officials said the soil monofill would receive about 65 trucks per day. That would be on top of the existing truck traffic to both the Mount Carberry Landfill and the Burgess BioPower biomass plant. She said the heavy truck traffic would create dust and there would be noise from both the traffic and the plant operation.

Fillion said the soil monofill would be in her viewshed and would have a negative impact on her property value.

“My house is going to be worth nothing,” she said. “At what point do we become a dump site.”

As she collects signatures, Fillion said she is surprised that many residents are not aware of the project. Others are circulating the petition, which will be given to state and local officials as well as the congressional delegation

While the petition opposes the soil monofill, it calls on the state and Legislature to work with the city to fund the remediation of the existing Dummer Yard landfill. Dummer Yard dates back to the early 1900s and was used for paper mill wastes until 1997. The bankruptcy court set up a \$1 million bond to cover post-closure care. The bond has run out of money.

The Dummer Yard Landfill occupies about 100 acres of a 400-acre site with about half the total Landfill consisting of bark waste. Remaining disposal areas consist of lime/ash, general mill waste and sludge.

In a review of the Dummer Yard landfill at the hearing, Mary Daun, an engineer with the N.H. Department of Environmental Services, said the leachate management system needs improvement, possible leachate seeps need to be addressed, the cap system requires regrading and repairs due to multiple areas of differential settlement, and the cap system, security system, leachate system, stormwater system, LFG vents and groundwater monitoring wells require repairs and continued monitoring. The landfill also needs to renew its groundwater monitoring permit. No cost estimate has been provided for the remediation of the Dummer Yard landfill.

Assisting the local opponents is Jon Swan, a vocal critic of the proposal by Casella Waste Systems to build a landfill near Forest Lake State Park in Dalton.

DES recently denied Casella a permit to build the landfill and the Vermont-based company has appealed the decision.

In an email conversation, Swan said response to the petition has been good, noting there has been vocal opposition on various Facebook forums. He said as seen with the Forest Lake proposal, stopping the soil monofill will require a robust response from the citizens of Berlin.

Swan said he is willing to help and share what he has learned from his fight against the Forest Lake landfill.

Swan has created a Facebook page on the Dummer Yard remediation and soil monofill proposal at facebook.com/groups/1200022861499069. The site also contains links to the petition at tinyurl.com/4dem9ee3.

LFOD Northwoods has stressed it is still in the early stages and conducting due diligence on the proposal. LFOD Northwoods held a conceptual meeting on the project with the Berlin planning board but has not requested a site plan review. The city and DES also hosted a public meeting on the project with the company.

LFOD is a combination of WL French Excavating Corporation and North and South Construction with Sanborn, Head, & Associates providing its expertise in remediation and solid waste.

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Editor

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