



Town of Bethlehem

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Town of Bethlehem, New Hampshire
Select Board
2155 Main Street
Bethlehem, NH 03574

1/6/2026

RE: Opposition to HB 707 and SB 593 – Preservation of Local Land-Use Authority

Dear Chairwoman Aron, Senator Rochefort, Senator Pearl, and Senator Watters:

The Bethlehem Select Board respectfully submits this letter in formal opposition to HB 707 and SB 593.

These bills represent a significant and concerning erosion of municipal land-use authority. Local control over zoning, planning, and land-use decisions has long been a cornerstone of New Hampshire governance, ensuring that decisions affecting public health, safety, property values, and community character are made by boards accountable to the residents most directly impacted. SB 593 also risks Bethlehem's existing legal contracts with Casella that were negotiated and implemented in good faith and represent the will of the citizens of the town.

Bethlehem is not opposed to responsible waste management, nor are we opposed to economic activity conducted in compliance with existing law. However, these bills would fundamentally alter the balance between state oversight and municipal authority by limiting the role of local land-use boards in reviewing, conditioning, or denying landfill expansion proposals within their own communities. Once local control is removed, it cannot be easily restored, and the long-term consequences for municipalities across New Hampshire are substantial.

We also wish to acknowledge that you may receive letters of support for these bills. We respectfully encourage legislators to closely examine the sources and motivations of those letters. Many supporting comments may originate from parties who stand to benefit financially from landfill expansion or from entities whose interests do not align with the long-term well-being of host communities. While such perspectives are entitled to be heard, they should not outweigh the voices of municipalities tasked with protecting residents, infrastructure, and natural resources.

Importantly, the Bethlehem Select Board represents all residents of Bethlehem, including those who may benefit economically from landfill-related activity. We have worked diligently to avoid rekindling past animosity between neighbors and to maintain community cohesion on a deeply

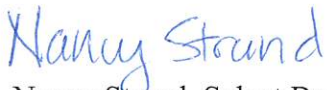
complex and emotional issue. Our opposition to HB 707 and SB 593 is not rooted in opposition to any individual or business, but in our firm belief that removing municipal authority will ultimately harm communities, exacerbate conflict, and undermine public trust in land-use decision-making.

Local officials are best positioned to weigh competing interests, impose appropriate conditions, and respond to site-specific impacts. State-level preemption of these responsibilities sets a troubling precedent that extends well beyond landfill regulation.

For these reasons, the Bethlehem Select Board respectfully urges you to oppose HB 707 and SB 593 and to preserve the principle of local control that has long served New Hampshire communities well.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the State of New Hampshire. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss Bethlehem's position in greater detail.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Strand, Select Board Chair
Bethlehem Select Board
Town of Bethlehem, New Hampshire