

Legislation requiring details on handling of 'trash juice' approved by NH House

BY: CLAIRE SULLIVAN - APRIL 11, 2025 1:02 PM



Harmful chemicals from trash seep into leachate, meaning its mismanagement can pose serious environmental and public health risks. (Photo by Dana Wormald/New Hampshire Bulletin)

The House approved a bill Thursday fueled by issues at landfills in the state managing leachate, or the “trash juice” created when rain mixes with waste.

The state already requires landfill applicants to create plans for managing leachate, but [House Bill 566](#) would require more details about the treatment of that liquid pollution and transportation for those that treat it off site.

This legislation would put the existing requirement for leachate management plans into statute, in addition to setting more detailed standards. It would include language that requires DES, before issuing a permit, to make a positive determination that the permit application includes a detailed leachate management plan.

Harmful chemicals from trash seep into leachate, meaning its mismanagement can pose serious environmental and public health risks. Those risks were put on display last year when the Department of Environmental Services found several landfills in the state failing to manage leachate as required. That included hundreds of violations in Bethlehem at the landfill run by Vermont-based Casella Waste Systems.

The House approved the bill on a voice vote of the consent calendar, meaning the committee recommendation to pass the legislation was OK'd without debate, among a host of other bills. The House Finance Committee, as well as the House Environment and Agriculture Committee, recommended the bill unanimously.

The state currently requires landfills to: have at least two locations for leachate disposal; estimate how much leachate they will generate; and describe how leachate will be handled at the landfill before being shipped somewhere else for disposal, according to DES. They must also have procedures in place to bring down leachate levels to a foot or lower within a week of a 100-year storm event. Regulations also include details about on-site leachate management systems.

The bill is one of several this year aimed at waste issues. Two of those bills — [House Bill 171](#), to establish a three-year moratorium on new landfills, and [House Bill 707](#), which aims to strengthen the state's siting standards for landfills — will appear before a Senate committee [on Tuesday](#). The chamber has traditionally been a hurdle to waste legislation.