

Casella withdraws wetlands permit application, plans to resubmit next year

BY: AMANDA GOKEE - DECEMBER 14, 2021 2:09 PM



Casella Waste Systems has proposed a landfill near Forest Lake in Dalton. (Amanda Gokee | New Hampshire Bulletin)

Casella Waste Systems sent a letter to residents of Dalton late last week informing them that it would be withdrawing a wetlands permit application related to its proposed landfill near Forest Lake. The company plans to resubmit the application in 2022.

The landfill plan has divided the town of Dalton, and some opponents of the proposed landfill are cautiously optimistic about the delay in the company's permit application process.

“I'd like to think that it's good news for the good guys here, but I don't know,” said Tom Tower, a board member of the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change.

The company said the decision to withdraw its current application came in part because of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services'

preference that review of the wetlands permit be coordinated with other required state and federal permits. In August, the state asked Casella to submit more information with its application – including a permit for alteration of terrain – which needs to be reviewed at the same time as the wetlands permit.

Casella also said it will perform additional fieldwork to support the applications, in addition to taking public opinion into consideration.

“I wanted to make sure to reach out to you directly so you would read it from me,” says the letter to residents, signed by John W. Casella, the company’s chairman and CEO. “This decision was not made lightly as it comes at a significant cost to our company, but it was made for several reasons.”

Tom Irwin, the director of the New Hampshire Conservation Law Foundation, an environmental organization that opposes the proposed landfill, said he interprets Casella withdrawing its permit as an attempt to strengthen its application.

“Clearly Casella is doing this because they feel there is an advantage and that they will be in a better position to get a permit doing this,” he said.

“Bottom line is we know they’re not going away. They’re not abandoning this project, but for whatever reason they clearly feel that this is a move that will benefit them in their attempts to get all their permits,” Irwin said.