

All but one landfill legislation in NH fail, industry influence questioned



By [SRUTHI GOPALAKRISHNAN](#)

[Monitor staff](#)

Published: 06-04-2024 5:00 PM

[solid waste](#) [facebook](#) [State House](#)

[trash](#) [landfills](#) [Environmental Reporting](#)

As the New Hampshire legislative session wraps up, it's another disappointing year for proponents of landfill legislation.

Out of five bills focused on landfill regulations, only one has made it to the governor's desk. This bill requires notifying the community and surrounding communities about the regional impact of a proposed landfill.

Legislation addressing landfill siting regulations, [a moratorium on landfill permits](#), and out-of-state trash did not pass the State Senate.

This outcome is upsetting, for Rep. Nicholas Germana, a first-term legislator serving on the House Environment and Agriculture Committee who is heavily involved in landfill legislation.

He understands from seasoned legislators that passing legislation can be a lengthy process, often taking years. However, he said there is an urgency to protect the environment with landfill bills.

"I do understand that these are multi-year efforts and I am in it for the long haul," said Rep. Germana. "But we do also have some urgency because there is a landfill permit that we don't need that is currently under consideration."

The issue of the proposed landfill has been a hot topic at several hearings. Casella Waste Systems' representatives did not provide testimony on the bills, even though the proposed legislation would directly impact their operations and the new landfill proposal.

This absence did not go unnoticed, Rep. Germana highlighted.

Article continues after...

Yesterday's Most Read Articles



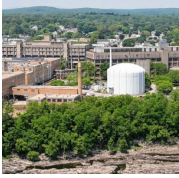
'A piece of me is gone': Mother grieves son killed in motorcycle crash



In Pembroke schools, end of year celebrations are colored by anxiety about what next year will bring



“We dont want to move” – As Concord continues to increase taxes, those on a fixed income fear what’s next



Granite Geek: A look at the nuclear reactor in Lowell, Mass. (wait – Lowell!?)



1 dead in overnight fire in Weare



Mill Brook School celebrates Teacher of the Year semifinalist Laura McKenna

Your Daily Puzzles



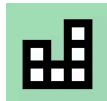
[Cross|Word](#)



[Flipart](#)



[Typeshift](#)



[SpellTower](#)



[Really Bad Chess](#)

On the contrary, Waste Management Inc., the operator of New England’s largest landfill in Rochester, attended these hearings and provided testimony.

“Casella has been very, very quiet,” said Rep. Germana. “It’s certainly not that they’re not interested in the outcome. They must be giving their two cents in another way.”

Most of the landfill bills received support from the House but they [failed at the hands of senators](#) for various reasons.

For House Bill 602, which proposes a bifurcated process in landfill permitting with a preliminary application phase overseen by the Department of Environmental Services to assess site suitability, Sen. Howard Pearl moved to kill the bill during last month's Senate session.

“The redundancy in the legislation and potential hindrances to the landfill permitting process” are significant issues with the bill Pearl said, underscoring the concerns expressed by the DES.

Just like Casella's stance on landfill bills, the environmental agency's position on these bills has also been questioned. The department has not outright supported any of the bills aimed at strengthening landfill permitting or operation rules. Instead, they have refrained from taking a position or have cited concerns about the legislation.

While Rep. Germana is frustrated with DES, he believes the agency's personnel are committed to achieving the best outcomes for the environment and public health. But he believes that the department's direction is ultimately shaped by the individual in the corner office.

“The governor is the one responsible, the buck stops there,” said Rep. Germana. “I think they [Casella Waste Systems] have had a relationship with Gov. Sununu and that's how they exercise their influence.”

Sruthi Gopalakrishnan can be contacted at sgopalakrishnan@cmonitor.com