

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

GSL Withdraws Applications For Dalton Landfill, But Expected To Re-File

By THOMAS CALDWELL, InDepthNH.org 6 hours ago



Thomas Caldwell photo

Protesters against Casella gathered in September 2021 at the Department of Environmental Services in Concord.

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CONCORD — Engineer John Gay has notified New Hampshire’s Solid Waste Management Bureau that Granite State Landfill, LLC, a Casella-owned company, is formally withdrawing its permit application for a landfill operation in the town of Dalton.

The letter, dated May 31, notes that GLS previously withdrew its wetlands permit application on Dec. 10, 2021.

“GLS plans to file a new Standard Permit Application in a few months,” Gay said in the letter addressed to Jaime Colby in Concord.

In a separate May 31 letter to Barbara Dorfschmidt of the Air Resources Division, Gay said GSL is formally withdrawing its application for a temporary air permit, but would be resubmitting its application in a few months.

Granite State Landfill had until June 1 to get all of the requested information for its solid waste permit to the Department of Environmental Services. If the application was not complete, the Solid Waste Management Bureau would have to deny it as being dormant.

The proposed landfill has been widely opposed by North Country residents, particularly those living near Forest Lake and the Ammonoosuc River, because it would be sited within 2,800 feet of Forest Lake State Park.

Vermont-based Casella Waste Systems, Inc., currently operates a landfill in nearby Bethlehem which also has been a subject of controversy. A year ago, the landfill experienced the largest leachate spill in the state's history, and opponents cite several other examples of ways the landfill has violated its permits.

The state Legislature recently passed a bill that requires new landfills to be sited in locations where any contamination would not reach tributaries of water bodies for at least five years. Soils at the Dalton site could allow contamination to reach the water in less than a month, leaving little time to stop it. However, it was unclear whether the newly passed bill would affect pending applications.

“This isn't about a specific site,” said Tom Tower of the North Country Alliance for Balanced Change when discussing the bill. “This is about the Merrimack River, this is about Lake Winnepesaukee, this is about the Atlantic, and ensuring that groundwater is protected.”

North Country residents have been fighting the Dalton landfill for four years, and the town put in a temporary zoning ordinance to prevent it. Dalton has scheduled a special town meeting for June 7, when citizens will decide whether to approve a permanent zoning ordinance for the town.
