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Landfill issue: Details, Gov., details

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For most Granite Staters, issues regarding landfills are out of sight and thus out of mind. But if you live near Forest Lake in Dalton or Whitefield, or you like to hike along or sit beside the Ammonoosuc River in Bethlehem, the siting or expansion of a landfill nearby tends to concentrate the mind.

Gov. Chris Sununu has expressed reluctance to approve **landfill legislation that is headed to his desk**. It would materially change how New Hampshire landfills are approved, with a site-specific standard regarding groundwater flow that critics claim is too restrictive. Critics also say this is targeted at one particular landfill expansion and changing the rules on that basis is dangerous. The bill's backers, however, say it is much better than current law that requires a 200-foot buffer from any body of water.

Sununu has said that this bill would result in a property tax increase for everyone in the state, meaning that it would reduce or end landfill expansion here, resulting in higher costs for towns and cities to dispose of their trash.

That is a valid concern but we have seen little from the governor and state officials as to just what in the proposed groundwater standards would be so onerous.

Likewise, there has been little heard from the state or federal government as to the science behind new limits on so-called "forever chemicals" like PFOAS. These have been in the ground and water for decades and are going to cost taxpayers millions of dollars for years to come to remediate, with little hard evidence as to just how harmful they may be.

In the case of the New Hampshire landfills, Sununu will do himself and citizens a great service by explaining with specificity and clarity the consequences of a bill that, on the surface, seems on the side of mom, apple pie, and water protection.