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## Lisa MacAllister: New bill would pause new landfills permits

May 29, 2024

To the editor:

It is rare these days to see bills passed nearly unanimously in our state legislature, but one bill came extremely close. Thanks to Reps. David Rochefort (R) and Nicholas Germana (D) for putting forth a bill that would pause new permits for landfills until 2028.

The reason for the bill is that New Hampshire has grossly inadequate restrictions on toxic waste disposal. The N.H. Department of Environmental Services is supposed to protect the environment and New Hampshire citizens.

Instead, the NHDES is ignoring the outcry to tighten regulations. In fact, the current proposal would allow more toxic leachate to move through the ground in a single day than the state of Maine allows in a single year.

PFAS, chemicals and toxins in our environment is one of the most urgent issues of our time. Because of our lax regulations, New Hampshire is now receiving over half of its trash from out of state. This out of state trash generates toxic PFAS-laden leachate. Once these toxins reach our waterways, and they already have, there is no getting rid of them.

This problem belongs to every one of us. The actions, or inaction, of the NHDES is shocking. Equally shocking are the “no” votes of many of the state senators who killed this bill.

Please call or write to all the state senators and tell them to vote for the amended SB 134 bill. Tell them if they want your vote next time around to put the wellbeing of their constituents before big dirty business. You can find the contact info by searching “NH State Senate Roster.”

The state has no need for any new landfills, realistically, for about 20 years once the Rochester landfill expands. There are much safer ways to dispose of waste that New Hampshire has not implemented. If the

NHDES is not up to the task of living up to their mission statement, perhaps it is time for new people to hold those positions.

Please contact the NHDES at [swmbrules@des.nh.gov](mailto:swmbrules@des.nh.gov) and demand they do their job. Tell them to strengthen, not weaken, the proposed landfill siting rules or scrap them and start over. You can go directly to their website as well. The deadline for public comment is June 5.

Right now, the town of Dalton is in the crosshairs of a proposed landfill that would be devastating to the pristine surrounding land and watershed. This includes Forest Lake State Park and the adjacent wetlands that feed into the Ammonoosuc River.

Make no mistake, that might be far away from you, but when the contamination spreads it will go down through the state. To learn more visit [saveforestlake.com](http://saveforestlake.com) to sign up for email alerts and access the contact information for our state senators.

Please take the time to tell these people who asked for our votes and promised to do right by the citizens of New Hampshire to keep their word.

Lisa MacAllister

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