
Letters To The Editor ...

Casella Argues Local Control - Really?

To the Editor:

Brian Oliver, a VP of Casella, urged in his March 16th LTE for all of us to contact NH state legislators and ask them to vote NO on HB 177. He argues that local control demands defeat of this legislation to preserve "local control". He says: "HB 177 is an attempt by opponents of a single development project to use legislation to bypass

the regulatory process and snatch local control from residents in Dalton...."

It's all about local control - really? His letter is a masterpiece of irony. For example:

1. He apparently works (and lives) in Saco ME but thinks he knows what's best for North Country residents.

2. His employer, Casella Waste Systems, is headquartered in Rutland VT. It's a multi-million dollar, for-profit, publicly-traded corporation, meaning its ultimate financial obligation is to its shareholders, even if that comes at the expense of

North Country residents.

3. Because VT (and ME and MA too) have reasonably set limits on landfill expansion within their states, its business model appears to be to move trash across state lines into NH. Casella freely admits it will use up to half of the capacity at the Dalton site for out-of-state trash.

4. Casella's track record of honoring commitments to local control is spotty at best. For example, ever since Casella got a toehold in Bethlehem with its NCES landfill, it has repeatedly threatened, sued, and fiercely campaigned to allow multiple expansions at NCES, de-

spite repeated votes by Bethlehem residents to prohibit endless landfill expansions.

5. Dalton town officials have repeatedly told Casella that the way to start discussions with the town is for Casella to make a filing under Dalton's existing zoning ordinance, but Casella has repeatedly refused to do so.

6. Contrary to what he says, local control is actually being exercised every day. Each and every town directly affected by Casella's landfill proposal has on various occasions and in various forms come out in

See **Letters**, Page A5

Letters

Continued from Page A4

opposition— this includes Dalton, Whitefield, Bethlehem, Littleton and Carroll. If Casella is really interested in local control, it has already gotten its answer - loud and clear.

7. Casella apparently wants North Country residents to ignore examples of its contempt for actually allowing local control, and focus instead on the multi-million dollar “bribe” it offers to Dalton. So far, this seems to be appealing only to Dalton’s elites and large landowners.

8. The dirty little secret is that towns other than Dalton will be impacted by a dump in Dalton far more than Dalton itself and so local control MUST include towns other than Dalton. This is because the dump site is in the far corner of Dalton, virtually right on the the border with Bethlehem, Littleton and Whitefield. and because it is these towns that lie downwind and downstream of the Dalton dump site. Casella apparently thinks it okay to “bribe” Dalton and totally ignore these other towns - all in the name of local control.

That’s the details on local control. In terms of the big picture, doesn’t local control really mean letting people decide what’s best for them? If you give the people of the North Country all of the facts - and then ask them if they think HB 177 is good legislation - I’m absolutely certain they will say YES. That’s the version of local control that I support— not the version that Brian Oliver advocates.

Eliot Wessler
Whitefield, N. H.