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## Nancy Morrison: DES landfill experts must stand up for NH

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Nancy Carbonneau Morrison

DAVID CREER's Business Perspective piece on Aug. 8, "Landfill questions best left to the experts" is misleading and does not tell the true story of New Hampshire's waste management situation.

As Mr. Creer points out, landfills are still needed in New Hampshire for New Hampshire trash. But a dirty secret has been rightly exposed by a front page Boston Globe article on July 20, 2021 by David Abel, that being that half of the trash buried in and on New Hampshire land is hauled here from out-of-state, mostly from Massachusetts, by private for-profit companies.

We have space for New Hampshire trash at existing landfills, such as Mount Carberry in Success and Turnkey in Rochester. This is a fact. And expansion as needed at these sites is both predicted and expected for years to come.

Mr. Creer stated that landfill technologies ensure that waste does not leak into nearby areas and that teams of engineers ensure that landfills protect the environment.

Yet the NCES Landfill in Bethlehem, operated by a private company, Casella Waste Systems out of Rutland, Vt., has a pending lawsuit against it filed by the Conservation Law Foundation that alleges it is leaking pollution into the nearby Ammonoosuc River. Also, between May 1-3, this very landfill reported an undetected toxic leachate spill of 154,000 gallons onto its land, again, across from the Ammonoosuc River. A New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) official indicated that this leachate spill may be the largest in state history.

Mr. Creer said that NHDES has its own team of experts to verify landfill safety and who govern the siting and building of landfills here. But NHDES itself says they have been understaffed and underfunded for years.

State Director of Waste Management Michael Wimsatt indicates that New Hampshire does not have a waste capacity crisis. And state statistics show that even if we continue the unconscionable practice of accepting and burying out-of-state trash, present permitted and pending capacity exists at the Mount Carberry Landfill until 2049 and Turnkey Landfill until 2034.

This subject matter has become very timely as Casella Waste Systems presents a solution that lacks a corresponding New Hampshire problem. They need to find more space for years to come to bury out-of-state waste for profit and they have their sights set on a virginal tract of land in the heart of our White Mountains to do it. This would unnecessarily and unconscionably destroy at least 17 acres of wetlands and five precious vernal pools for corporate profit.

As Mr. Creer said, landfill questions should be left to the experts. NHDES are our experts, even if in a reduced capacity, who will determine if a landfill project is environmentally safe for New Hampshire and benefits our state.

People in the Granite State are depending on NHDES to do the right thing and deny a wetlands permit that would further the false narrative that our state has a waste capacity crisis. We have plenty of capacity to accommodate New Hampshire trash.

To help, please write NHDES by Sept. 13 and ask them to deny a wetlands permit for this unneeded landfill. Email **wetlandsapplicationpubliccomments@des.nh.gov**.

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Nancy Morrison lives in Mont Vernon.