

PURCHASE YOUR SUMMER RAFFLE TICKETS TODAY AND YOU COULD WIN A NEW CAR OR \$20,000 IN CASH!



Support

# State Says Casella Fell Short On Preventing Major Landfill Leachate Spill In Bethlehem, N.H.

New Hampshire Public Radio | By **Annie Ropeik**

Published July 22, 2021 at 5:36 PM EDT



Casella /

Casella told the state that up to 154,000 gallons of leachate (otherwise known as garbage juice) overflowed at this landfill in Bethlehem.

New Hampshire regulators say the trash company Casella didn't do enough to prevent a

NHPR

Morning Edition

within a matter of days.

Leachate is sometimes called garbage juice. It's the liquid that's pumped out of landfills after rain runs through trash. Casella told the state in May that up to 154,000 gallons of leachate [overflowed at the Bethlehem dump](#) while it was unattended on a weekend.

They said the problem was a mechanical failure but the spill was contained by a holding pond. It was a much larger spill than the state typically sees for leachate, regulators said at the time, and may have been the largest ever seen in New Hampshire.

In a June letter to the state, Casella promised a series of repairs to address the problem. But the Department of Environmental Services (DES) now says the Vermont-based company's Bethlehem subsidiary is out of compliance with the landfill's permit and state law.

"The incident and reporting indicates a failure to operate and maintain the leachate management system in a manner that controls to the greatest extent practicable spills," DES wrote to Casella Wednesday.

The letter asks for a review of the landfill's entire leachate system by Aug. 1, and monthly status updates on Casella's planned repairs.

DES also wants specifics, by Aug. 1, on how the spill was cleaned up, whether it posed a hazard to the environment and human health, and how Casella will avoid a repeat incident in the short and long term with "temporary operating procedures" or "a permanent resolution."

It comes as Casella awaits a response from DES on a permit to disturb wetlands for a [proposed new landfill](#) in the nearby town of Dalton, which has stirred huge pushback in the North Country.

The company is also already facing a federal lawsuit, dating to 2018, for allegedly polluting the nearby Ammonoosuc River with leachate from the [Bethlehem facility](#).

Tags

NH News

casella

Climate Change

Landfill



## Annie Ropeik

Annie Ropeik joined NHPR’s reporting team in 2017, following stints with public radio stations and collaborations across the country. She has reported everywhere from fishing boats, island villages and cargo terminals in Alaska, to cornfields, factories and Superfund sites in the Midwest.

[See stories by Annie Ropeik](#)



## Latest Stories



### NH News

N.H. News Recap For July 23, 2021: COVID And The State Economy



### NH News

N.H. Bishop Accused Of Sexual Abuse In 1980s

### NH News

Coronavirus Update: N H Reports 1 More COVID Death, 48 New Cases



**NH News**

Concord Sets Rain Record For July, While Drought Remains In North Country

Stay Connected

NHPR  
**Morning Edition**

Persons with disabilities who need assistance accessing NHPR's FCC public files, please contact us at [publicfile@nhpr.org](mailto:publicfile@nhpr.org).

[Contact](#)

[NHPR Radio Schedule](#)

[Job Opportunities](#)

[Public File](#)

[Terms Of Use](#)



[NHPR News - Your Service](#)