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## Trash Trucks on Littleton's Main Street - Eliot Wessler

Feb 25, 2022

### ***Trash Trucks on Littleton's Main Street***

#### **To the Editor:**

NH's Department of Transportation just delivered a powerful message to Littleton: better get ready, because Casella's trash trucks may soon be rolling down Main Street.

The recent Caledonian Record article (NHDOT Says Casella Driveway Permit Application Incomplete) pulls back the curtain on what most people have known for a long time—if Casella gets the permits it needs to build its proposed dump in Dalton, the 100 trash trucks per day going to and from the dump will wreak havoc on a number of North Country towns.

What's different now is that NHDOT's recent letter to Casella indicates that Littleton's Main Street may be ground zero for all of the truck traffic.

Casella tried to avoid entanglement with Littleton. Their Traffic Study had the "preferred" truck routes to the Dalton dump bypassing downtown Littleton by going more than 20 miles out of the way and using surface roads instead of I-93.

Most significantly for Littleton, the letter indicates the most direct route is the most likely route that truckers will use. It's clear to NHDOT (and anyone that has looked at a map) that the most direct routes to the Dalton dump site are through Littleton, with northbound trucks using I-93 exit 41 in Littleton, and southbound trucks using I-93 exit 42 in Littleton.

And to prepare for the truck traffic through Littleton, NHDOT tells Casella to describe any necessary improvements at the US 302/NH 116 intersection—in other words, the intersection of Main Street and Cottage Street.

Because Casella's preferred route was to go right through the centers of Bethlehem, Carroll and Whitefield, these towns have been preparing to deal with the impacts of the increased truck traffic on health, safety, the town's finances, and quality of life for their residents.

Unfortunately for Littleton, as a result of NHDOT's recognition that truckers will use the shortest route to the Dalton dump site, that town now needs to prepare for these adverse impacts. And in light of the recent tragic accident involving a truck hitting a pedestrian on Main Street, this is likely to be a painful process.

In addition to the traffic problems it will bring, the Dalton landfill proposal is a hot mess. It will destroy way too much wetlands and prime habitat; risk contamination of water supplies as well as the Ammonoosuc River and Forest Lake; and harm our tourism-based economy.

Casella's proposed Dalton landfill stacks up to be a great deal for the Rutland VT-based company, but it's a wretchedly bad deal for Dalton and the adjacent communities of Littleton, Bethlehem, Carroll and Whitefield.

But if we as North Country residents stand together, with our local elected officials, and our state legislators, we can keep out-of-state corporations from dumping on the North Country again. We did it with Northern Pass, and we can do it again.

Eliot Wessler

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