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What Casella Isn't Telling You - Jon Swan

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What Casella Isn't Telling You

To the Editor:

If you happened to attend the NCES Landfill “open house” in August, I suspect the Casella representatives on hand failed to share some very important information with you about their “state-of-the-art” facility.

The NCES Landfill July 2024 Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report revealed some very disturbing data and trends, relative to site groundwater contamination within the watershed of the Ammonoosuc River.

Of the 30 NCES groundwater monitoring wells tested for the presence of PFAS contaminants, also known as “forever chemicals”, 19 wells had detections, totaling a whopping 107 PFAS detections in groundwater OUTSIDE of the “state-of-the-art” double-lined landfill. 17 of those wells had detections for PFOA. PFOA was designated as a “hazardous substance” by the EPA in April, 2024. There were 8 exceedances of Ambient Groundwater Quality Standards (AGQS), and 7 of those were for PFOA! 7 wells also had FIRST-TIME detections for PFAS. 10 wells had 1 or more detections of a new PFAS contaminant at that well location. Overall, there was a 178% increase in “Total PFAS” levels in groundwater from the prior 2023-2024 testing at the 12 wells with prior testing data available for comparison, excluding the 7 wells with first-time PFAS detections.

I'm guessing NCES Landfill Manager Kevin Roy failed to share this information while serving hot dogs at the open house?

Did Casella's Engineering Manager Joe John Gay tell you about the June 24, 2024 Letter of Deficiency, LOD No. SWMB 24-006, issued by the NH Department of Environmental Services, citing the NCES Landfill for 2,182 violations, relative to leachate mismanagement?

While your children were eating cotton candy and having their faces painted, did CEO John Casella disclose that NCES staff had unknowingly PENETRATED both the primary and secondary liners of the Stage IV overlay liner system ELEVEN TIMES while installing landfill gas management wells between 2014 and 2024? Most likely not, as this was not revealed until September 6, 2024, when NCES submitted an "Incident Report" to NHDES.

Perhaps Casella will send out another mass mailer, informing us that they are "Keeping Us Safe In The North Country", as they did in March, 2023?

In the September 6th Incident Report, Casella does tell us that "Leachate passing through the penetrations in the overliner have no pathway to the environment and are instead captured by the Stage I liner". That is a VERY ALARMING admission, and should be cause for concern, considering the fact that portions of the Stage I liner system are over 36 years old, constructed by the previous owner before Casella purchased the facility in 1993-94. There are numerous documents which detail instances in which Stage I liner damage and flaws had been discovered, including original construction damage, holes, and liners NOT being welded together.

I myself have tested the main "Seep" surface water runoff from the NCES property, as it cascades into the Ammonoosuc River, on three occasions for PFAS: October 2023, June and August, 2024. Each lab report revealed the same 4 PFAS compounds, PFHxA, PFBS, PFOA, and PFHpA, with a 5th, PFHxS being detected in both 2024 samplings. Meanwhile, NO surface water testing for PFAS was conducted at NCES in July, despite initial detections for PFOA at NCES surface water locations SF-1 and S-101 in August 2023 testing.

I believe that the widespread detections of PFAS and other potential leachate indicators in groundwater monitoring wells is related to the penetrations of the Stage IV overlay liner system. I also question the integrity of the Stage I liner system, now being relied upon as a stop-gap for leachate releases.

Casella is not sharing this information with you because they do not want you to connect the dots. Their “state-of-the-art” landfill is not “Keeping Us Safe In The North Country”. So why on earth would we allow this same company and the same team of engineers build another landfill anywhere near Forest Lake and Alder Brook?

In order to not get sued a third time by Casella, I need you to understand that all of this is my opinion, based on my research and experience.

Jon Swan

Dalton, N. H.