

New Hampshire Bulletin

Casella pulls permit application central to Dalton landfill plans

BY: MOLLY RAINS - JUNE 17, 2026 2:29 PM



📷 Forest Lake, in Dalton. A landfill proposed for adjacent property has divided residents for years. (Photo by Molly Rains/New Hampshire Bulletin)

Trash giant Casella Waste Systems has withdrawn an application with the state related to a contested landfill project in the North Country.

Some who have fought the Dalton project for years over [health, environmental, and economic concerns](#) said the move was a sign that the company has been cowed. But it's not the first time Casella has withdrawn a permit application, and a spokesperson said in an email statement Wednesday morning they would continue to push ahead with plans for the site.

The permit withdrawal was announced Monday, June 15, in [a letter](#) from Casella to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. Casella subsidiary Granite State Landfill, LLC, will withdraw its application for a wetlands permit at the site, the letter states.

The wetlands permit is one of several Casella would need to move ahead with the project, proposed for a site near Dalton's Forest Lake. Other related applications remain in limbo, including the company's application for a solid waste permit – which the New Hampshire

Department of Environmental Services denied in 2025, prompting Granite State Landfill to appeal and [take the state to court](#).

That case is still underway. But because the permit for which Casella withdrew its application on Monday would be necessary for the company to move ahead in Dalton, landfill opponents said they interpreted the news as a step back by the company.

“(We are) never going to get the ‘you win, we lose’ letter from this company,” said Adam Finkel, a lakeside resident and outspoken landfill opponent. “I think this is as close as we’re going to get.”

However, a spokesperson for Casella did not say that the company was pulling back. Rather, Casella expects the permitting process for the Granite State Landfill to move ahead, said Casella Vice President of Communications Jeff Weld.

According to Weld, the company withdrew the permit application to prevent “confusion or inefficiency” in the permitting process while a related solid waste permit goes through the appeal process.

“Proceeding in this manner allows the relevant regulatory considerations to be addressed in a coordinated and consistent way,” Weld said. He added that the project was intended to address the “demonstrated need for disposal capacity” in New Hampshire given the anticipated 2027 closure of a Casella landfill in nearby Bethlehem. Anti-landfill activists dispute the contention that New Hampshire is facing a capacity shortfall.

Casella’s ability to move ahead with the Dalton landfill will depend on the outcome of the company’s legal disputes with the state, and would also require them to re-file for a wetlands permit at a later date. In their Monday letter, the company explicitly reserved the right to resubmit the application.

Casella [rescinded a wetlands permit application](#) for the same site in 2021, and later resubmitted it.

That’s one reason why North Country Alliance for Balanced Change is greeting Monday’s withdrawal with measured enthusiasm, said President Wayne Morrison. The move is “great news,” but the alliance will take Casella at its word that the company is not done in Dalton, said Morrison and Vice President Tom Tower.

“We’ve been working all along to try and prevent this from happening, and I think this is another indication of how troubled this whole permitting process is,” Morrison said.

Anti-landfill advocates in the North Country have opposed the Dalton landfill’s development for years. Gov. Kelly Ayotte has also been openly against the proposal, [committing in her 2025 inaugural address](#) to put a stop to the plans and reiterating that opposition [during an event](#) two months ago in Dalton.

“I said it before I was elected. I said it in my inauguration. I just said it recently,” she said April 17. “We are not going to locate a landfill at Forest Lake.”

Now, Tower said he was cautiously optimistic. “Hopefully, this is the beginning of them pulling out of Dalton and altogether, but at the same time ... it’s still active and ongoing, so we’ve got a lot of things to keep our eye on,” he said. “... As part of this ongoing saga, it’s really good news. At the same time, you know, we cannot take our eye off the ball.”