



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Hunter Smith, Sierra Club Maine

Date: May 18, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1639: **An Act To Protect the Health and Welfare of Maine Communities and Reduce Harmful Solid Waste**

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, I am writing on behalf of Sierra Club's over 20,000 members and supporters in Maine. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we defend everyone's right to a healthy world. In pursuit of that mission we strongly suggest that you vote in favor of LD 1639.

The harmful effects of landfills are well documented, and include air, water, and soil pollution, as well as disruption of ecosystems and wildlife. Specifically, leachate from the Juniper Ridge landfill joins the local water table and is even dumped into the Penobscot river. Landfills devalue property, impede economic development, and bring odor, noise, and traffic. This detriment to the surrounding communities and the Penobscot Nation is exacerbated by importation of out of state waste.

When the state took ownership of the Juniper Ridge Landfill, they assured Mainers that no out of state waste would be introduced. Despite that assurance, a loophole has allowed out-of-state waste to be classified as Maine waste if a small amount of recyclable material is removed. This loophole has allowed 200,000 pounds of out-of-state waste to enter Juniper Ridge each year. That is more than 10% of the total municipal waste generated by the state in 2019. As much as 90% of the waste Juniper Ridge handles comes from Massachusetts, a direct contradiction of the state's promise that no out-of-state waste would ever move through this facility. LD 1639 would make good on the state's promise by closing a loophole that allows for importation of out-of-state waste.

We hope you'll vote in favor of LD 1639; Maine is far more than a dumping ground for surrounding states.

Respectfully submitted,

Hunter Smith

Sierra Club Maine

Legislative Team Volunteer