



**Testimony Neither for Nor Against  
LD 235, Resolve, Regarding the Operation and Future Capacity of State-Owned Landfills**

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March 17, 2025*

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Vanessa Berry, and I serve as the Sustainable Maine Program Manager for the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM). I appreciate the opportunity to testify Neither For Nor Against LD 235.

This bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection to evaluate two potential opportunities in Maine's materials management system: assessing the viability of an existing landfill in Jay and reviewing the Operating Services Agreement for Juniper Ridge Landfill (JRL) in Old Town.

NRCM strongly supports Maine's waste reduction and diversion goals. We work closely with residents, municipalities, businesses, schools, and organizations to promote waste reduction at the source, transition away from single-use materials, and encourage recycling and composting whenever possible. While our top priority is to promote the minimization of waste, we recognize that landfill disposal will remain a necessary part of our system. As such, we strongly believe that landfills must be well regulated to ensure that they are safe for public health and the environment, and they must be responsibly managed with long-term community health and safety in mind.

We have significant concerns about Maine's current waste disposal practices, particularly regarding transparency and management at JRL. Community members have long reported air, land, and water quality issues associated with JRL's operation. Expanding landfills indefinitely is not a sustainable solution, yet we acknowledge the need for appropriate waste disposal options.

For this reason, we support the Committee's efforts to reassess Maine's agreement for operating JRL and to explore alternative disposal options. However, we urge careful reflection on lessons learned in Old Town to avoid replicating existing landfill challenges in Jay. While the former Jay paper mill site may offer a short-term solution, it will be critically important to fully consider potential long-term environmental and community impacts before establishing a new State-owned landfill with a contracted operator. Thank you for your time and consideration.