



BANGOR CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF BANGOR

March 9, 2023

Open Letter on Biosolids

Dear State of Maine Legislature, State Elected and Appointed Officials, Municipal Elected Officials, and Federal Officials,

The City of Bangor, like many municipalities and quasi-municipal wastewater districts, remain extremely concerned about our limited, allowable disposal options for biosolids (commonly referred to as sludge) from wastewater treatment facilities.

The current approach of landfilling and transporting to Canada is tenuous. Should the ability to transport materials out of state cease to exist, there is inadequate operational landfill capacity to meet the need, thereby returning the State to crisis level. In order to avoid devastating impacts to our communities including public health, housing, economic development, recreation, tourism, and more, an alternative option must be available for implementation within a matter of weeks, if not days, should the current approach fail.

LD 1911 and 1639 were passed in the 130th Legislative Session with different effective dates, thereby staggering the impact. LD 1911 prohibited land application of biosolids and sale and distribution of compost and other agricultural products containing biosolids. This has resulted in facilities, who relied on beneficial reuse of biosolids, now being forced to landfill. LD 1639 prohibited some waste, from out-of-state, entering Maine. Therefore, landfills are seeing an increased demand for biosolid disposal at the same time they are receiving fewer bulking materials which stabilize and support the structure of landfills.

We find ourselves in the awkward position of a politicized battle in which we do not wish to participate – we only seek an environmentally responsible and sustainable remedy for managing biosolids in Maine.

Wastewater will never stop flowing to treatment facilities, from residents flushing their toilets to industries that rely on wastewater treatment (e.g. dairy production, metal finishing, breweries, etc.). We take our responsibility to stand between raw sewage and the waters of our state very seriously. In the event we cannot remove biosolids from the system, we, like many others, will be in the position of violating federal law by discharging untreated sewage into the Penobscot River (and other waterways). Consequently, catastrophic damage to our infrastructure will occur, culminating in untold environmental, health, and economic consequences.

We implore the State of Maine Legislature to take the necessary steps NOW to create additional avenues for Maine to responsibly manage its biosolids.

We are committed to making our staff and resources available to participate in the development and implementation of a long-term, sustainable solution that will benefit both the people and waters of our great state.

Thank you for your time and attention. We encourage you to reach out should you have questions or require clarification about our position by emailing or calling:

Bangor Water Quality Director, Amanda Smith
207-992-4471 -- Amanda.smith@bangormaine.gov

Bangor City Manager, Debbie Laurie
207-992-4201 -- Debbie.laurie@bangormaine.gov.

Respectfully,

Chair Richard Fournier

Councilor Clare Davitt

Councilor Susan Hawes

Councilor Joseph Leonard

Councilor Cara Pelletier

Councilor Gretchen Schaefer

Councilor Jonathan Sprague

Councilor Daniel Tremble

Councilor Dina Yacoubagha

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