

**Testimony in Support of HB 619**  
**House Committee on Finance**  
**February 11, 2025**

In the last budget, the House Finance Committee supported the appropriation of two million dollars to the [Solid Waste Management Fund](#) (SWMF), a matching grant program for New Hampshire municipalities and businesses . At the same time, the grant language was amended to prioritize food waste diversion and to increase the sources from which the fund could accept monies. The budget, as signed into law, ultimately included one million dollars for the fund. HB [619](#), which I am introducing today, would add an additional one million dollars to the fund, bringing up to the level originally sought by the House. It is much-needed to continue the good work being done in the state in furtherance of solid waste management.

This bill would continue the prioritization of food waste diversion with 50% of the funds sought to be appropriated targeted to food waste. The targeting of food waste reduction and diversion would remain in effect until June 30, 2028.

HB 619 is supported by New Hampshire's [Solid Waste Working Group](#) (SWWG) of which I am the chair. SWWG is a stakeholder committee statutorily created and charged with working on a variety of solid waste-related issues, including working closely with New Hampshire's Department of Environmental Services (DES) on long-range solid waste planning, developing creative solutions to our state's solid waste management challenges and recommending related legislation.

**Promotes State's waste diversion goals.** HB 619 supports goals adopted by the Department of Environmental Services' recently issued [Solid Waste Management Plan](#) (SWMP). The state has been making progress on its goals with the support of this legislature, the hard work of DES and many others in this state. Through legislative action, New Hampshire has established new [solid waste diversion goals](#) requiring our state to strive to reduce the weight of solid waste disposed of by 25% by 2030 and by 45% by 2050, achievement of which are included in the SWMP.

The issue of landfills is front and center both here at the State House and statewide. As we know, a new landfill is not a popular prospect with either our Governor or vast numbers of our citizens, especially considering that we can expect half of the trash to come from out-of-state. DES has stated that while there is a regional capacity problem, New Hampshire has adequate landfill capacity for its waste. We need to do our part to preserve our existing landfill capacity for our residents. Waste diversion is achieved through reuse, recycling and composting. State support is important in achieving our diversion goals.

**Helps our towns and promotes business development.** Our towns are trying to fulfill their responsibilities to their citizens economically and safely in an increasingly complex scenario, juggling myriad contracts, price negotiations and hauling arrangements. It can be expensive. Helping towns and cities through the grant program is a great way to kickstart increasing food waste diversion and other recycling activities, all of which will achieve our SWMP goals and

preserve landfill capacity for what needs to be landfilled. Solid waste businesses can help from our local farms to smaller food waste collectors and composters, to food bank and companies operating anaerobic digesters. Diverting food waste is a winner in so many ways. This legislature has recognized this in past by passing a law requiring one-ton generators or more of food waste to divert it from landfills effective February 1, 2025. Recognizing the value of unused food, the law requires food first to be donated to food banks or to farms before being composted.

The monies provided to towns and businesses through the SWMF will help to jump start solid waste diversion activities in our state through infrastructure development, education and community outreach, all vital to the achievement of our solid waste diversion goals

**Helps get more food to the hungry, promotes composting and saves landfill capacity.** The diversion of food waste reduces solid waste disposal, preserves state landfill capacity, fosters the development of infrastructure for diversion and help provide more food for the hungry. Per EPA statistics, it is anticipated that at least 25% of all waste being disposed of is food waste. Supporting food waste diversion would be an important step in promoting the transfer of more edible food to the hungry, decreasing waste going into our landfills, preserving landfill space and helping us achieve our solid waste diversion goals. *Numbers don't lie – with 172 families participating, New London diverted 32 tons of food waste in 2024.* Not only do our towns save money on per ton tipping fees, but they also save money on trucking costs. Unlike composting, landfilled food waste also generates extensive methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas.

**Funding sources.** The SWMF can also accept monies from sources including donations, grants, legislative appropriations, fees, other matching funds and incentives. New grant funding may eventually be available through the EPA via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Unfortunately, the current guidelines do not allow the state to apply for funding and to pursue a subgrant program, but DES is hopeful this will be possible in the future.

The establishment of the SWMF and expansion of funding sources aligns with an important goal of the SWMP – “Establishing reliable funding sources. Funding is an underlying issue that will determine success in achieving almost all of the goals identified in this plan. For many years, NHDES’ solid waste management program has faced resource constraints that have challenged the department’s ability to engage in many of the issues central to this plan. The same is true for many New Hampshire municipalities and solid waste management districts. Therefore, identifying additional funding sources will be important to ensure meaningful progress can be achieved.”

A [majority](#) of states fund programs like these, as well as solid waste-related administrative costs, with surcharges on tipping fees charged for tonnage dumped in landfills. New Hampshire does not. It relies heavily on general funds, unlike other [states](#). Rates vary, but, for example, Iowa has charged \$4.25/ton since the 1980s. North Carolina charges \$2/ton. Vermont charges \$6/ton. Ohio charges \$4.75.

Because this is of concern to all of us, it should be noted that lower tipping fees at our landfills attract more out-of-state waste. We rely heavily on private landfills in this state. The Interstate

Commerce Clause bars us, and all states, from banning out-of-state waste at private landfills or placing surcharges solely on out-of-state waste. At this point, easily 50% of our waste comes from out-of-state. There's a reason for that. We have comparatively more lenient laws on what can be put in our landfills, we have no surcharges unlike other states, and its comparatively cheap to landfill here. According to a July 2021 Waste Business Journal report, analysis indicates that the per ton tipping fee in Massachusetts is an average of \$122/ton municipal solid waste, Vermont is an average of \$116/ton and Rhode Island is \$100/ton. New Hampshire is about \$60-\$80/ton to landfill. This is high nationally, but cheap in the northeast. One can see why towns in our neighboring states might want to send their trash here. Adding a surcharge is something to consider in times of diminished revenue, especially considering that our tipping fees here are far less than they are regionally and could help fund the SWMF to the benefit of us all.

**Moves State forward.** Now that we have established our solid waste goals, it is time for our state to move ahead to achieve them. The rest of the northeast has very aggressively moved ahead creatively and effectively to reduce what can be landfilled, supporting better infrastructure for recycling and composting and any number of other policies, including the closing of landfills. This has a direct effect on our state as our landfills take more and more trash from other states. Our contribution to the regional solid waste solutions should not be landfills and all their attendant problems. That is just not acceptable. We need to support our towns and businesses to save money and develop more effective ways to solve their solid waste challenges.

HB 619's appropriation to continue our state's waste diversion work and prioritizing food waste reduction and diversion is an excellent step forward for our state. I urge the committee's support.

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