

My name is Sam Nicolai, and I am Vice President of Engineering & Compliance for Casella Waste Systems. I am also a licensed Professional Engineer, and have more than twenty years of experience in environmental engineering for solid waste and industrial facilities. I am submitting this additional testimony in reference to the Contaminants of Emerging Concern Pilot Project proposed under Senate Bill S.49.

The proposed Contaminants of Emerging Concern Pilot Project requires the Agency of Natural Resources to prepare reports and recommendations for treatment of Contaminants of Emerging Concern specifically from leachate from landfills. It does not consider the presence of these types of compounds that may be present at other sources, including domestic wastewater, industrial and commercial discharges, or remediation sites known to have had impacts to the environment through spills or other discharges. The resources of the Agency should be prioritized to protect human health and the environment where risks have been identified and/or where uncertainty exists.

As previously documented, the Agency has specifically evaluated whether landfill leachate is being acceptably managed at Vermont wastewater treatment facilities (WWTP), and specifically concluded the practices are acceptable. A copy of the December 2018 memorandum documenting the Agency's conclusions is attached herein. Vermont's landfills are only one component of the solid waste, wastewater, and remediation-related facilities that provide important services to the state's residents and businesses, while having responsibility for stewardship of materials that can contain Contaminants of Emerging Concern. Singling out landfills for a "pilot project" puts the focus on one industry while ignoring the potential risks at other industries where even basic evaluations have not been completed.

We urge the Committee and the Agency to evaluate important issues such as Contaminants of Emerging Concern across all of the relevant sources within the state, and not to do so at landfills in isolation. Landfill leachate is never discharged directly to the environment, only through permitted treatment facilities --- just like every other permitted commercial and industrial discharge. These types of studies should focus on the permitted discharges first – which are most representative of potential impacts to the environment, and specifically to Vermont's surface waters and groundwater.