



TOWN OF PRINCETON

Office of the Selectboard

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Honorable Harriette L. Chandler
24 Beacon Street, Room 333
Boston, MA, 02133

Honorable Kimberly N. Ferguson
24 Beacon Street, Room 473B
Boston, MA, 02133

January 22, 2019

Dear Senator Chandler and Representative Ferguson,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed expansion of the Fitchburg-Westminster Landfill. For this expansion, the Town of Westminster seeks to acquire 85 acres of Article 97-protected land currently within Leominster State Forest. The landfill is currently projected to reach capacity in 2024. The proposed expansion is estimated to extend capacity to 2034. As you are aware, this proposed expansion requires legislative approval.

At its closest point, the landfill is located approximately 4000 feet north of the Princeton/Westminster town line. The proposed expansion would bring the landfill to within approximately 2500 feet of the town line and destroy another beautiful natural habitat. Many Princeton residents report that they have suffered years of occasional noxious odors emanating from the landfill. During the past 6 months, the problem has become considerably worse. Many have filed complaints with the Department of Environmental Protection. They describe the smell as nauseating. The odors are clearly affecting quality of life for many of our residents. In addition to the nuisance odor and short-term health effects, it is unclear what long-term health effects Princeton residents may face due to air contamination from the landfill. Groundwater contamination from the landfill and its impact on the environment is also a concern since Princeton residents rely on wells for their water supply.

A group of residents attended the Princeton Selectboard meeting on Wednesday January 9 to seek our assistance. Also in attendance were four employees of Waste Management, the operator of the landfill. Fred Confalone, Senior Manager of Business Development for Waste Management, addressed us and acknowledged that they are having a problem with odors and that they are working to resolve it. Waste Management was aware that they had a problem, but did

not appear to be proactive in notifying surrounding communities of the problem. It is difficult to have confidence that an expanded landfill will be run in a manner that minimizes its impact on the Town of Princeton.

Unlike the Town of Westminster and the City of Fitchburg, the Town of Princeton receives no compensation in host fees or otherwise from this facility. An expanded landfill that is even closer to our town will likely continue to have a negative impact on the quality of life and health of our residents, as well as result in potential environmental consequences, infrastructure costs and decreased property values to the Town of Princeton and its landowners. For these reasons, we oppose any expansion of the landfill in favor of the utilization of alternative technologies for solid waste disposal, coupled with increased public education and efforts for waste reduction, composting, reuse, and recycling.

Sincerely,

The Princeton Selectboard



Richard C. Bisk, Chair



Edith M. Morgan, Clerk



Karen G. Cruise, Member

cc: Mr. Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, MassDEP
Ms. Mary Jude Pigsley, Regional Director, MassDEP Central Regional Office
Mr. Leo Roy, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Mr. Matthew A. Beaton, Secretary, Massachusetts EOEEA