

**Focus on Facts, Not Fear**  
**By Bill Herman, Chairman**  
***Concord Regional Solid Waste/Resource Recovery Cooperative***

In recent letters to the editor, writers have made several assumptions about the Concord Regional Solid Waste/Resource Recovery Cooperative (Co-op) and the proposed landfill in Canterbury. I appreciate the dedication to the protection of the environment and the river reflected in their comments and assure them the more than two dozen member communities of the Co-op feel the same way. However these comments have focused on fear and given scant attention to the facts.

In case you don't know about the Co-op, we are a not-for profit entity. We are a 27-member group of communities responsible for handling the solid waste disposal needs of our member towns. We have been successfully providing this necessary service for nearly 20 years and have been carefully and thoughtfully looking into a solution for handling the future needs for solid waste disposal our members will experience as our population grows. The Co-op has considered many long and short term options and measures to mitigate the impacts of population growth and reduce waste disposal needs. The Co-op has been and remains committed to pursuing the best environmentally sound and cost effective measures. All costs and benefits of the Co-op's activities are realized by the member municipalities and their residents. Waste reduction strategies have merit and will play a significant role in the Co-op's ongoing efforts. The need for an appropriate option for disposing of those portions of the waste stream that cannot be recycled remains and cannot be dismissed by any responsible party.

As part of its long term waste management plan, the Co-op has submitted plans to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) for a landfill to be constructed in Canterbury for use beginning in 2014. The application will go through the required permitting process, which includes a public hearing. In addition to this important facility, the Co-op continues to coordinate and look for ways to increase recycling efforts, including the potential location of a regional recycling facility at the Canterbury site.

As odd as it might sound, it is important to note that this site near the Merrimack River is an optimal location for a landfill. Engineers reviewed 95 sites within the Co-op communities and found this site's geological makeup and site location ideally situated to keeping the environment -- and thus the river -- clean. The Canterbury site has excellent soil and groundwater conditions and can easily be made unobtrusive from I-93 and the Merrimack River. A nationally renowned fluvial geomorphologist (one who studies rivers and their meanders) found the inherent nature of the land at the site to be stable in the very long term with respect to river movements. The study was submitted to NHDES with the landfill application and has been provided to others, including the Town of Canterbury. It will also be reviewed by another independent regional expert retained by NHDES as part of the permitting process. We would gladly share the in-depth study with anyone interested.

The site is also ideal because it offers an opportunity to expand preservation lands in a cost effective manner. In the Co-op's constant effort to remain environmentally conscientious, the Co-op has proposed to the Canterbury Conservation Commission that an area of approximately 80 acres be preserved. This would include almost all the river frontage (nearly one mile), all of the flood plain and a 250-foot buffer from the river. This area could be tied in with the existing Riverland Conservation area by trails expanding the current conservation area.

Another important aspect to understand is that the proposed landfill will be designed to have no impact on water quality. There will be no discharge from the landfill to the river. The landfill will have independent double liners, separated by sand layers, each with a leachate (water which has come into contact with waste materials) collection system. Clean storm water will be directed to retention ponds and leachate will be collected and either re-circulated back into the landfill or trucked to wastewater treatment facility. Monitoring wells and very predictable ground water movement characteristics will provide redundant security both during and after landfill operation.

The Co-op has been a good neighbor for its entire history and will continue to be. It is a non-profit government organization that has safely and economically disposed of more than 2,000,000 tons of waste and 1,000,000 tons of ash during that 20 year history. Its sole motivation is to provide safe and economical waste disposal for its members. The Co-op seeks to continue to provide this essential municipal service to its members through the construction and safe operation of this proposed landfill.

The very word "landfill" tends to strike fear in the hearts of residents and the Co-op understands that. We also appreciate that the protection of natural resources inherent in the requirements for the design and operation of the landfill imposed by the Co-op and the permitting review by the NHDES and the cost effectiveness and feasibility of various alternatives may not be common knowledge. Let us assure you that once the facts and data are fully understood, it is clear this site is not only appropriate but outstanding, and there is nothing to fear from it. Of course, we all need to pursue all feasible measures to reduce, reuse and recycle our waste but with even the most optimistic waste reduction results, the landfill is simply the best environmentally sound and cost effective alternative for our communities' remaining waste disposal needs. The Co-op is approaching this proposed project with environmental and fiscal responsibility and would not have it any other way. Through this project, we will continue to provide the necessary resource our residents need and have come to rely on without damaging what is important to all of us.

As has always been the case, the Co-op invites all who are interested to attend its meetings. The Co-op notifies the public before all meetings and encourages attendance. In fact, when the Co-op acquired the land in Canterbury, it was openly discussed in a session with a representative of the Town of Canterbury in attendance. After the land was purchased, the Co-op held several open meetings with the Canterbury Board of Selectmen as well as the Canterbury Planning Board, in addition to an open community forum in Canterbury hosted by the Board of Selectmen. It is our goal to provide as much public education as possible on this critical issue.

I appreciate the attention this proposal is getting from area residents, as it shows us that residents care just as deeply as we do about our environment. If anyone has questions or concerns, please contact us via email at [crswrrc@aol.com](mailto:crswrrc@aol.com), by phone at 753-9265, or at our office at 347-B Village Street in Penacook, as we would be happy to discuss the proposed landfill or our organization in greater detail.