FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document No. 740

H.P. 596 House of Representatives, February 14, 1983

Referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative McGowan of Pittsfield.

Cosponsors: Senator Bustin of Kennebec, Representative Callahan of Mechanic Falls and Representative Bell of Paris.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE

AN ACT Concerning the Agricultural Usage of Tannery Sludge.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. Demonstration project. Subject to the Revised Statutes, Title 38, section 362-A, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection shall require a demonstration project to determine whether there are adverse environmental or health effects caused by the use of tannery waste as an agricultural fertilizer.

The specific objectives of the project are to: Monitor and evaluate impact on ground water and soils; monitor and evaluate heavy metal uptake by the plant crop; and establish optimum sludge application rates.

The commissioner shall, consistent with available funds, establish the methods and parameters for the conduct of a 3-year pilot project. The commissioner shall, through the Bureau of Water Quality, enter into appropriate contracts with a qualified firm to conduct the project, a selected tannery and the municipality in which the tannery is located.

The selected tannery shall agree to provide use of a site of not less than 20 acres, but not more than 50 acres, in size, suitable for the purposes of the project as determined by the Bureau of Water Quality.

The selected tannery shall agree to assume the costs of monitoring operations during the 2nd and 3rd years of the project.

The commissioner shall, in November of each year prior to 1987, report to the Board of Environmental Protection on the progress of the project and recommend changes in regulations if results of the project warrant them.

Sec. 2. Additional funding authorized. The department may receive funding and services for this project from any public or private source.

Sec. 3. Appropriation. The following funds shall be appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act.

	1983-84	1984-85
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DEPARTMENT OF		
Bureau of Water Quality		
Tannery sludge demonstration project		
All Other	$60,000	--

STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to provide a basis for establishing regulations governing the land application of tannery sludge. This would be done by monitoring and evaluating the results of a 3-year demonstration project which uses tannery sludge in the growing of crops.

Presently, more than 170 cubic yards of tannery-related sludge is being generated by publicly-owned wastewater treatment facilities in Maine. The problem is that the costs for providing new disposal facilities for these wastes are prohibitive and existing facilities will soon no longer be available.

Tannery sludge is not hazardous, however, it does contain high levels of chromium -- much higher than current Department of Environmental Protection regulations allow in sludge for land application purposes. Technical literature regarding chromium-bearing sludge indicates minimal impact due to chromium from land spreading such residuals. In fact, a recent study prepared at the request of the United States Environmental Protection Act and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection specifically recommends that a land spreading demonstration project be initiated. The study also concluded "There is no need for futher studies on tannery - PIOW waste management. There is sufficient information to evaluate available technologies. The next step is to institute pilot programs and actually test the technologies under working conditions." This report was completed by Clark-McGlennon Associates and the Arthur D. Little Company in September, 1982.

The long range solution is probably recovery of the chromium directly from the sludge. This approach is still being developed, and no cost-effective method is expected to be available to the tannery industry in the near future.

For the short term, the use of tannery sludge to enhance soils and crop yields, nitrogen levels are 6%-10%, dry weight, still provides resource recovery rather than costly disposal, or a threat to an important Maine industry and the jobs it represents.

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