

## A College Powered by Garbage

by Michael Lemonick, a writer for Climate Central ([climatecentral.org](http://climatecentral.org))

A growing mound of garbage outside Rochester actually provides up to 85% of power and heat for UNH's nearly 15,000-student campus in Durham!

Communities are now seeking clean, green alternatives such as wind, water, and solar power instead of oil, coal, or natural gas--fossil fuels. UNH began investigating landfill gas a few years ago, after it installed a plant that burned natural gas for energy and provided hot water for heating. The natural gas burned relatively cleanly, but it still emitted carbon dioxide.

Meanwhile, Waste Management (WM), a company operating a nearby landfill, was dealing with a gas surplus containing 50% methane, which is created when bacteria break down organic waste. Methane is a pollutant and can not be released into the air, but it can be used as fuel. Most landfills are forced to simply burn off their excess gas.

Between WM's excess methane and UNH's need for sustainable living, a match was made! Four years and \$49 million later, the 12.6-mile EcoLine pipeline is in full operation. Methane is extracted from the landfill using a system of wells and piping, then purified before being sent to UNH's plant.

The Environmental Protection Agency classifies the methane as a renewable fuel since anything it releases is first sucked out of the atmosphere by the coffee plants, banana trees, and other organic matter now rotting in the landfill. This means methane's carbon output is relatively insignificant.

New Hampshire standards require electric utilities to generate at least part of their energy from renewable sources, so UNH sells credits to utilities that don't meet the requirement. This money helps pay for the pipeline.

Landfill gas "is pretty widely used in the U.S. and Europe," says Joan Ogden, an environmental-



science professor at the University of California, Davis. Who says you can't turn trash into treasure?

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### NH Bans Texting While Driving



Gov. John Lynch signed a law making New Hampshire the 16<sup>th</sup> state to ban text messaging while driving.

The law also bans typing on laptop computers or other electronic devices while driving. An exception is made for entering a name and number in a cell phone to make a call.

Violators face a \$100 fine.

The texting ban took effect on January 1, 2010.

Lynch said that texting while driving poses a serious danger. He said the law sends a strong message that drivers should be attentive at all times.