

**Testimony of
Mark A. Mitchell MD, MPH
Before the Energy and Technology Committee
In support of Raised Bill 118 AAC Environmental Justice
February 26, 2008**

Good Afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Fontana and members of the Committee, my name is Mark Mitchell. I am a public health physician and President of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice. **I am testifying in support of Raised Bill 118, An Act Concerning Environmental Justice as drafted by the Energy and Technology Committee with a number of modifications. This bill as drafted is the bill that was proposed last year. We have been meeting with a coalition of organizations and the CT Department of Environmental Protection to strengthen this bill from last year's version and have suggestions for language changes which I will submit separately.**

The Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice is a statewide coalition of over 60 organizations representing over 30,000 members. We have local affiliates in Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport and more than 30 organizational members statewide. Some of our member organizations supporting this legislation include the Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters, the Archdiocese of Hartford, Clean Water Action, East End Community Council of Bridgeport, Congregations United for Racial Equality and Justice, African American Affairs Commission, Working Families Party, and the Inter-religious Eco-Justice Network of CT.

Major pollution sources are often concentrated in one or two neighborhoods of many towns in Connecticut. While it may make sense in some cases that these facilities be co-located, currently state regulatory agencies cannot consider other local facilities when a new facility is sited; or consider their proximity to homes, schools, hospitals, senior housing or other sensitive populations. Many times the neighbors have no say in proposals to build additional polluting facilities or for expansion of existing facilities in their communities; yet they may suffer health effects and reduced quality of life from these facilities. In addition, there is often no incentive for older polluting companies to upgrade their facilities in order to reduce pollution.

This legislation recognizes certain neighborhoods within 69 towns that have three or more major pollution sources within a one mile radius and designate them as "Environmentally Stressed Communities". The map of the communities is attached to my testimony and the list of towns is on the reverse side of the map.

When expansions of current or new facilities are proposed in environmentally stressed communities this bill will allow for three things:

- 1. It will allow for enhanced notification and public participation in regulatory processes involving these facilities in environmentally stressed communities.**

2. It will allow DEP, DPUC, and the Siting Council to consider the proximity of new facilities to existing facilities and populations when conducting their regulatory reviews.
3. It will allow for enhanced enforcement of current DEP regulations in environmentally stressed communities
4. It will allow for the provision of environmental benefits in environmentally stressed communities.

"Environmentally stressed" census block groups are defined as census block groups that have more than 3 "Environmental Affecting Facilities" located within a one mile radius or 2 facilities and a highway within one-half mile of each other. Environmental Affecting Facilities include the following:

1. Power plants
2. Trash or sewage sludge incinerators
3. Large sewage treatment plants
4. Trash transfer facilities
5. Active landfills
6. Multi-town recycling facilities
7. Asphalt or concrete plants
8. Major sources of air pollution as defined by U.S. EPA
9. Air toxic sources listed on the federal Toxic Release Inventory (TRI)

This bill should not prohibit any facilities; only allow more scrutiny by these state agencies and communities when siting and regulating these facilities in environmentally stressed communities.

This bill will provide benefits to business, to towns, to the environment and to public health by preserving and enhancing the environment, health, property values, and the quality of life for community residents and therefore attracting new customers and new businesses to town. We need to continue to reduce pollution in Connecticut to reduce asthma and other diseases. Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I will be willing to answer any questions that you may have.

Environmentally Distressed Communities

Data Sources

Environmentally Distressed Communities - Created by The Capitol Region Council of Governments as part of long term goal to address the issue of Environmental Justice, these maps of targeted areas using Census 2000 Block Group analysis environmentally distressed communities. One mile buffers were created around these areas to identify areas that are second nearest to each distressed area. Areas that are second nearest are highlighted by the number of environmentally affecting overlays.

Environmental Justice Areas - Created by The Capitol Region Council of Governments, CROCG has developed maps of target areas with low-income, low-homeless areas include additional block groups that had at least 50% low-income population (household income 200% the 2000 Census median household income) by family size) according to Source:

Census 2000 SPT P008
Census 2000 SPT P009
Census 2000 Tiger Line Files

Air Emissions - From the Air Permit Inventory maintained by the CT DEP, Bureau of Air Management, Source map scale is 1:250,000. Also see 50% buffer map created from 2000 Census Tracts, Source map scale is 1:250,000.

Wastewater and Solid Waste - From a GIS layer of Wastewater Facility point locations maintained by the CT DEP, Bureau of Water Management, this map only shows Sewer Treatment Plant with design flow greater than 1 MGD. Source map scale is 1:250,000.

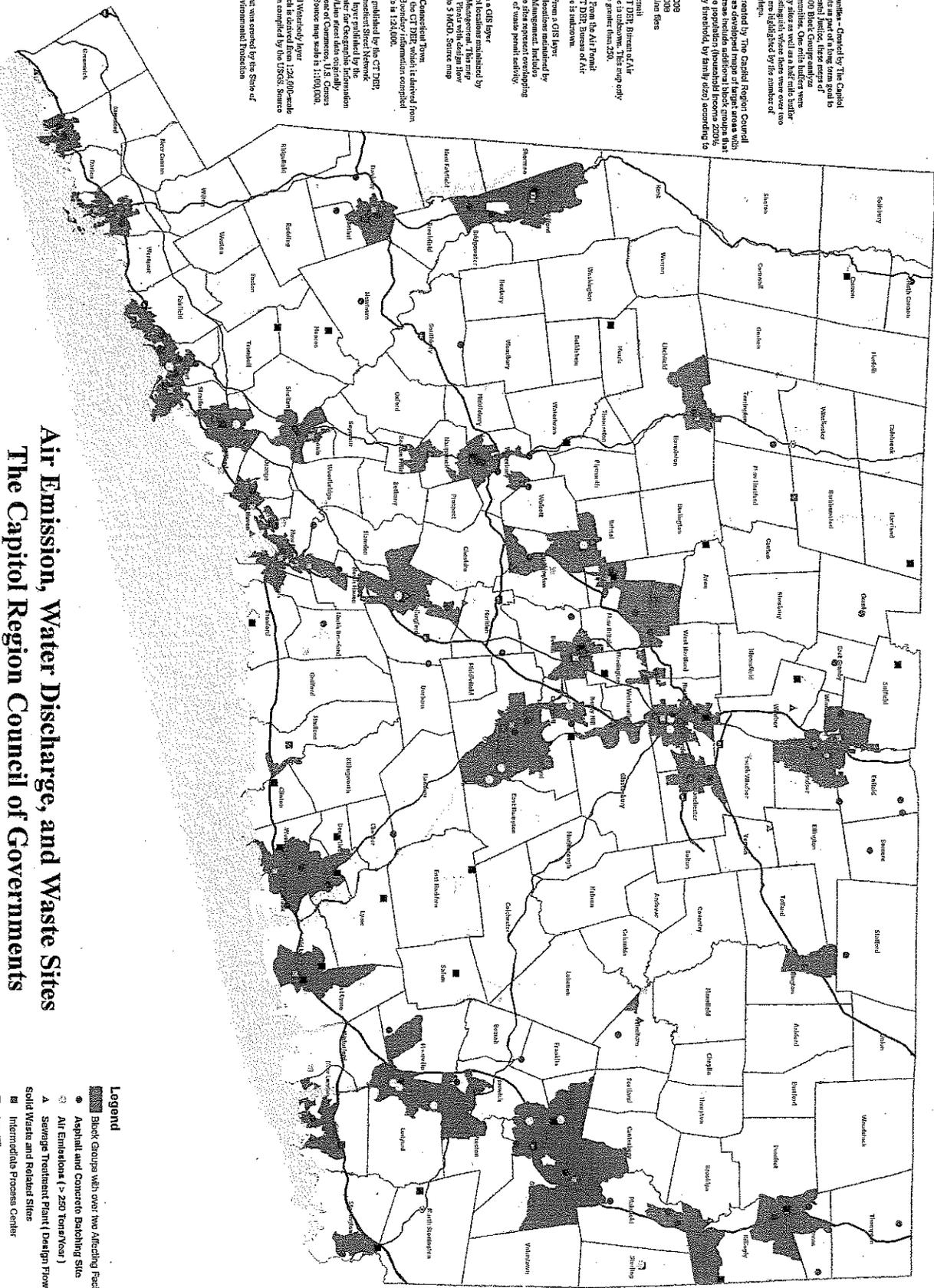
Superfund National Priority - From a GIS layer of NPDDES Permit Facility point locations maintained by the CT DEP, Bureau of Water Management, this map only shows Superfund sites with design flow greater than 1 MGD. Source map scale is 1:250,000.

Public Buildings - From the Connecticut Towns and Cities Directory, this map is derived from 1:250,000 scale D/G Detailed Boundary information compiled by the USGS. Source map scale is 1:250,000.

Trails - From the Trails layer published by the CT DEP, which is derived from the Connecticut State Network Site Plan, TOBERLIN 2000 layer published by the University of Connecticut Center for Geographic Information and Analysis using the TOBERLIN data set originally compiled by the US Department of Commerce, US Census Bureau, Geography Division. Source map scale is 1:100,000.

Highways - From the Newer Waterbody layer published by the CT DEP, which is derived from 1:250,000 scale PLD Detailed Boundary information compiled by the USGS. Source map scale is 1:250,000.

Layers - The original map project was created by the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection 3/10/06.



**Air Emission, Water Discharge, and Waste Sites
The Capitol Region Council of Governments
- 2008 -**



**Environmentally
Stressed Towns**

ANSONIA

BEACON FALLS

BERLIN

BETHEL

BRIDGEPORT

BRISTOL

CANTERBURY

CROMWELL

DANBURY

DEEP RIVER

DERBY

EAST HARTFORD

EAST HAVEN

EAST LYME

EAST WINDSOR

ENFIELD

ESSEX

FAIRFIELD

FARMINGTON

GRISWOLD

GROTON

HAMDEN

HARTFORD

HARWINTON

KILLINGLY

LEDYARD

LISBON

LITCHFIELD

MADISON

MANCHESTER

MIDDLETOWN

MILFORD

MONTVILLE

NAUGATUCK

NEW BRITAIN

NEW HAVEN

NEW LONDON

NEW MILFORD

NEWINGTON

NORTH HAVEN

NORWALK

NORWICH

OLD LYME

OLD SAYBROOK

ORANGE

PLAINFIELD

PLAINVILLE

PORTLAND

PRESTON

PUTNAM

ROCKY HILL

SHELTON

SOUTHINGTON

SPRAGUE

STAMFORD

STONINGTON

STRATFORD

SUFFIELD

TORRINGTON

WALLINGFORD

WATERBURY

WATERFORD

WEST HARTFORD

WEST HAVEN

WESTBROOK

WETHERSFIELD

WILLINGTON

WINDHAM

WINDSOR LOCKS