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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps, Program Director
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee

Thursday February 28, 2008

Supporting House Bill 5597, An Act Concerning Biomass

Senator Fonfara, Representative Fontana, and members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony supporting HB 5597. Environment Connecticut supports this legislation's limits on exceptions to the statutory definition of "Sustainable Biomass" within Connecticut's Class I Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

Section 16-1(a)(45) of the CGS defines sustainable biomass generation that can qualify for Class I RPS credit. However, it also includes language exempting certain biomass facilities from compliance with the sustainable biomass definition and standards. Environment Connecticut has previously testified in support of eliminating these exceptions to ensure that the intent of the Class I RPS standard of providing an incentive for creation of *new and clean* renewable generation serving Connecticut is realized.

While HB 5597 does not completely achieve this goal, it does appropriately narrow the exceptions to the sustainable biomass definition. This is a step in the right direction as it should help maintain the strength of the Class I renewable energy market and limit the extent to which non-sustainable biomass generation is allowed to qualify for Class I credit and displace other, cleaner and renewable Class I resources.

Environment Connecticut urges the committee to consider further narrowing that exception, and suggests a "sunset" provision to accomplish that task. **We suggest that language be added to the effect that after January 1, 2012 no biomass gasification plant may receive Connecticut Class I RPS credit unless its fuel meets the sustainable biomass definition currently contained in statute.**

We believe this approach would allow sufficient time for all relevant stakeholders to craft appropriate solutions to the challenge of managing Connecticut's Construction and Demolition waste stream, without inappropriately qualifying generation using such non-renewable and potentially "dirty" fuel as Class I renewable generation.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps
Environment Connecticut