



BRISTOL RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY OPERATING COMMITTEE



TUNXIS RECYCLING OPERATING COMMITTEE

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Testimony of the
Bristol Resource Recovery Facility Operating Committee
And the Tunxis Recycling Operating Committee
to the Environment Committee

February 2, 2009

Berlin

Branford

Proposed H.B. No. 5474

Bristol

AN ACT CONCERNING PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL AND STATE RECYCLING

Burlington

Hartland

Good morning Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Jonathan S. Bilmes and I am the Executive Director of the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility Operating Committee and the Tunxis Recycling Operating Committee. These two organizations are made up of 16 towns and cities in Connecticut representing over 10% of the state's population. We are concerned with the safe, environmental and cost-effective disposal of municipal solid waste and recyclables. In addition, since our Board is comprised of Mayors, Selectmen and Town Managers, we also represent the direct interests of our taxpayers, both residential and commercial.

Meriden

Morris

New Britain

Plainville

Plymouth

Today I am presenting written testimony on Proposed Bill No. 5474, AN ACT CONCERNING PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL AND STATE RECYCLING

Prospect

Seymour

DEP's Solid Waste Management Plan was finalized in December 2006. Advisory Committees have been meeting for the past two years to assist DEP implement the Plan. DEP acknowledges an existing shortfall in disposal capacity of over 500,000 tons per year of municipal solid waste which is expected to grow to over 1,000,000 tons per year unless Connecticut dramatically increases the amount of solid waste recycled/diverted from the waste stream. Despite the fact that two legislative sessions have occurred since DEP released the plan, no funding mechanisms have been implemented to achieve the goals of the Plan. We applaud the Environment Committee for promoting recycling related legislation. It is sorely needed.

Southington

Warren

Washington

Wolcott

Recommendations:

1. **Support increased stable state funding to assist local governments, regions and the business community increase recycling/diversion rates. Focus on commercial recycling efforts.**

2. **A significant percentage (>50%) of any new funding should be directed to assist local governments increase recycling/diversion rates.**

Significantly, the commercial, institutional and industrial waste stream comprises one half of the solid waste generated in Connecticut. We need to recognize that the principle method to significantly increase recycling/diversion rates would be through policies and programs related to commercial, institutional and industrial waste.

We look forward to working with you to address the economics of general commercial and industrial waste disposal practices to better establish financial incentives to achieve the state-wide solid waste objectives, including the establishment of incentives for small business to recycle and changing state statutes to facilitate municipal control of commercial and industrial waste services if financial incentives fail or don't materialize. Increased enforcement and education for this sector should also be considered.

In addition, we believe that a significant administrative burden on municipalities and DEP can be reduced by changing the performance criteria from recycling rates, which requires everyone to count leaves, bottles, and cans and focusing on MSW generation rates which are much easier to obtain and measure.

Consistent with the above are our recommendations regarding the \$1.50/ton solid waste tax. Presently, this tax is assessed only on MSW delivered to the state's six waste to energy facilities, contributing \$3,300,000 to the DEP. MSW delivered to CT landfills and transfer stations that export out of state¹ (approximately 580,000 tons) is not taxed. In addition, the tax is now assessed on metals recovered for recycling at the waste-to-energy facilities (approximately 50,000 tons). The tax is not assessed on any other types of waste (C&D, medical waste, etc).

Recommendations (consistent with CEO):

1. **Oppose any increase in the current tax rate on MSW delivered to the state's six waste to energy facilities.**
2. **Apply the \$1.50/ton uniformly on all MSW generated in the state, regardless of final disposal location and remove the tax on metals recovered for recycling.**
3. **Use the additional net revenue generated (approximately \$795,000) by the uniform application of the tax to fund local and regional recycling efforts.**

¹ A small amount of MSW is driven directly out of state and is also not assessed the fee.

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Thank you in advance for considering our testimony on this important issue. Please contact me if you have any questions. We fully recognize that the state of the economy will be front and center during the 2009 session of the General Assembly. But it is important that we remain steadfast in our efforts to ensure that the state's municipal solid waste stream is managed in the safest – and most cost-effective – manner for years to come.

