



Connecticut Business & Industry Association

**TESTIMONY OF
ERIC J. BROWN
BEFORE THE
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 2, 2009**

Good morning. My name is Eric Brown and I am an associate counsel with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA). CBIA represents approximately 10,000 Connecticut businesses, both small and large companies throughout Connecticut. Approximately 90% of our member companies have fewer than 50 employees. CBIA appreciates this opportunity to comment on:

PROPOSED BILL NO. 5474: AN ACT CONCERNING PRIVATE, MUNICIPAL AND STATE RECYCLING

CBIA is pleased to support the goal of this bill as framed in its Statement of Purpose: "To encourage private, municipal and state recycling."

We understand that more work will be done on developing final language for this bill. As that language is developed, we encourage the drafters to stay true to the stated purpose by avoiding mandates and focus on increasing flexibility and effectiveness.

We understand language may be added to this bill mandating that contracts between businesses and their waste haulers include the handling of recyclables. CBIA would not support such a provision. Rather, we would prefer the bill seek to expand recycling opportunities for businesses and allow them to benefit from competition among municipal franchise haulers, their own waste haulers and private recyclers.

With respect to the concepts raised in the current proposed bills, we offer the following:

(1) Review and expand beneficial uses of recyclable material

CBIA strongly supports expanding beneficial reuse options and doing so in a streamlined manner. We understand the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is also developing a bill to accomplish this goal. We urge the sponsors of this bill to work with

the DEP and the business community on this issue to foster a single proposal with broad support.

(2) Develop a public education program to encourage state residents to use biodegradable products and to recycle

CBIA supports using education as a primary strategy for increasing recycling. The term "biodegradable" will need to be defined in the context of a time frame. We also understand that biodegradation of specific materials in a landfill can vary greatly depending on a variety of factors. Perhaps a better approach for this goal is to provide education and encouragement for increased residential composting.

(3) Amend regulations to require all plastics to be recycled.

This provision appears to be at variance with the statement of purpose. We add our voice to those cautioning against a mandate on all plastics without a careful evaluation of potential markets for these materials and the overall economic impact of such a mandate. Proponents should also consider that current technology, it is our understanding, allows much of the energy that goes in to producing many of these products is safely recoverable as energy through Connecticut's waste-to-energy process.

(4) Require state agencies to create a sustainability plan

CBIA is supportive of this concept

(5) Require certain municipalities to provide curbside recycling.

CBIA favors having curbside recycling as an option for businesses. We do not take a position at this time on the concept of mandating municipalities to provide this option.

(6) Require public places to provide accessible recycling receptacles

Another mandate that, depending on the final language, could add measurable costs to many businesses that "invite the public" into their businesses. Obviously there is the cost of the receptacles but those receptacles will also have to be serviced. A careful economic impact on businesses – especially small businesses should be conducted prior to taking any action on this concept.

(7) Establish a civil penalty for the combining of previously segregated recyclables with Non-recyclables

CBIA is not prepared comment on this concept in the absence of a specific proposal.

(8) Increase the fine for littering or not recycling.

CBIA is not prepared comment on this concept in the absence of a specific proposal.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on Proposed Bill 5474.