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Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB 5474.

Europeans recycle 60% of their waste stream, while we only recycle 30%. Why? Public education and expectations, as well as infrastructure. Walk down a European street or even a Colorado street and you'll see not only trash bins, but recycling bins. We tell people to recycle, but there are no recycle bins in most public spaces. So people throw bottles, cans, paper, and everything else into the trash, or worse, on the ground. You need only look around the LOB and into the trash bins here to see that this is true.

Other communities are seeing enormous improvements in their recycling habits and reductions in their solid waste streams. We need to adopt here the ideas that work: like the recycle bank, pay-as-you-throw and single stream recycling. The key is to make recycling as easy and convenient as possible, and to eliminate financial dis-incentives for recycling and even to create incentives for recycling.

The current law says we have to recycle. But, currently, in some towns, residents have to pay extra for recycling. So they just throw everything in the trash and pay less for violating the law. In most public spaces, there are trash barrels but no places to dispose of recyclable materials. Obviously the incentive is to not recycle, since we make it both inconvenient and more expensive to obey the existing law.

And how many of you have discovered that after years of carefully separating your office paper from the trash, that when you stay late at night you see the cleaning company dump your trash and your recyclable paper all into the same bin? I have and it's very discouraging.

We must do better. And we can do better! And it isn't complicated....it's pretty basic.

This bill is focused on making it convenient to recycle and incentivizing people to recycle. The goal is to reduce CT's solid waste and increase our recycling rates.

This bill makes a rationale start by including a comprehensive set of actions that most everyone can support. Rep Bye and I have worked collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders in crafting the bill, and while each may suggest some appropriate improvements (e.g. funding for better enforcement & implementation of existing laws) they all have expressed support for many of the basic approaches, including DEP, bottlers, trash haulers, the business community, environmental advocates, grocers, CRRA, CCM, and others.

Last year, our recycling bill made it through the legislative process successfully until the last week of session. This bill builds on that work, addressing concerns from last session, and it adds components based on input from environmentalists, recyclers, trash authorities, haulers, grocers, businesses and the many other stakeholders that we have met with since the summer.

Key components of this year's bill include:

- The creation of a capped, revolving loan fund, modeled on the clean energy fund – to loan towns money to cover their start-up costs for better recycling systems, including single stream, pay-as-you-throw, and recycle bank. Some may need the funds to purchase single stream barrels for automated pick-up, others may need money for educating residents about PAYT. The savings generated by the towns from reduced tipping fees would be used to pay back the state loan.

  These programs have been implemented with good results in other states:

- Philadelphia is using an incentive program called Recycle Bank that has increased the city's sustained recycling rate to 92%.
- In Seattle, 40% of all municipal solid waste is recycled because the city requires volume-based pricing for solid waste collection services.
- In San Francisco, after switching to the single-stream approach, the city's recycling rate climbed to 69%, surpassing California's mandatory 50% recycling law.

We propose that the money for the loan fund come from a 5 cent tax on each non-reusable paper or plastic bag given to a consumer establishment.

- The placement of recycle bins wherever trash bins are placed in public spaces

- The establishment of recycling plans in state buildings – since we should be leading by example and we're not!

- Requiring towns and trash haulers to offer curbside pickup of recycling if they provide curbside pick-up of trash. Further, this bill would prohibit trash haulers from charging more to residents or businesses who elect curbside recycling. Furthermore, commercial waste removal contracts should specify with the next contract renewal or within 2 years, whichever comes first, how recyclables will be collected, in addition to solid waste. By explicitly establishing a plan with each business for removal of recyclables, it will be less tempting for businesses to just throw materials into the trash bin.

- The enforcement of existing recycling laws on office cleaning companies, with appropriate fines for non-compliance.

- Changes to the way Towns report their recycling data to DEP, so that towns would report their solid waste rather than their recycling volumes. This would save Towns many hours in required paperwork and also saves DEP staff time. This was suggested as part of the SWMP consultation.

- Allowing the state to contract with local towns and sub-contractors to engage in enforcement activities on a contingency basis. In other words, the town or contractor would be paid from fines they collect. DEP lacks the staff to conduct full enforcement activities now, and this would leverage them at no cost.

- Allowing towns to pick up commercial recycling, if business chooses that option, and to dispose of it at CRRA or similar facilities. Currently towns are prohibited from taking commercial recyclables to CRRA. This approach would be more efficient, would reduce solid waste disposal costs for businesses, would save towns money since they get a credit back from CRRA for their recycling volume, and it would reduced carbon emissions, since the town's recycling trucks are passing right by those businesses anyway.

- Requiring DEP to explore automatic adoption of the "beneficial use" approvals of selected other states that can serve as benchmarks for CT. This would more efficiently expand the recycling options especially for commercial materials, while reducing the work burden on the DEP.

- Prohibits towns from having a zoning ordinance that conflicts with recycling efforts, as sometimes happens as a result of old zoning rules regarding the footprint allowed for businesses to store trash on their property until pick up time.

CT boasts many beautiful landscapes. Being an avid outdoors-person myself, preserving our natural beauty is a priority for me. For me it is a tragedy to look on the side of our roadways and hiking trails and see litter, whether it's a soda can or a fast food wrapper. It's an equal tragedy to see us waste energy and natural resources by throwing away recyclable goods, at a time when electricity prices, petroleum prices, and de-forestation are issues driving global conflicts.

I hope you will give your favorable consideration to this bill. I know that Rep Bye and I are committed to continuing to work collaboratively on drafting specific language with our LCO attorneys and with stakeholders.