

Written Testimony of Kirstin Lawrence-Apfel, Department of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of Connecticut and Resident at 919 Route 32, North Franklin, CT. Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee, February 13, 2009, Testimony in support of: **Senate Bill 3, "An Act Prohibiting the Acquisition or Use of Certain Parcels of Land as Ash Residue Disposal Areas"**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Kirstin Lawrence-Apfel and my testimony is in support of **Senate Bill 3, "An Act Prohibiting the Acquisition or Use of Certain Parcels of Land as Ash Residue Disposal Areas"** My letter represents one contribution for the People for the Voice of Franklin, in Franklin, CT.

I am a wildlife biologist currently in graduate school at UConn. I study and teach Wildlife Management, and interact daily with students and professors of natural resources. We address problems such as those relating to Earth, water, air, and the **sustainable** "wise use" of those resources. While I cannot speak for everyone in the department of Natural Resources and the Environment, I can speak about my direct observations and experience as the closest and possibly most affected resident to the proposed Ash Dump site, and how it would affect the area's natural resources and quality of life.

My land borders the road now used by Franklin Farms and the gravel pits of Franklin and Nacin. This is the road proposed for use as entry and exit to the Ash Dump. Traffic on Route 32 is already congested and there are frequent accidents. We don't need the increased traffic and risk of hundreds more large trucks per day carrying ash and leachate with heavy metals and toxic chemicals in them. If the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) proposes widening the road, this will directly affect my property and the local wildlife on it by reducing the habitat available. It also will not reduce the risks associated with transporting toxic materials on Route 32 and the Franklin Farms access road, which both border Cold Brook by less than 20 feet at times. Cold Brook traces its way into the Shetucket River.

My neighbors and I agree on many issues with locating an Ash Dump along the Shetucket River and on top of our aquifer: it's a Trophy Trout river and is the only river in the Eastern part of the state stocked with Atlantic Salmon; at least one pair of Bald Eagles, a State Endangered Bird and our National Symbol, nest annually on the border of the proposed site; it would sit over a class A (drinkable as is) aquifer and clean water is an increasingly valuable commodity; the area lies within The Last Green Valley, a National Heritage Corridor encompassing 35 towns and designed to preserve the character of a landscape composed of forests and farms.

My land is almost 12 acres, and it is mostly forested wetland with Cold Brook winding through it. It is bordered by the forests and farms characterized by The Last Green Valley. This kind of "edge effect" of connecting blocks of wetlands, forests, and farms provides the best habitats for the widest variety of wildlife species in New England. In the end of September, 2008, I placed Remotely Triggered cameras on my land to capture pictures of the incredible biodiversity of wildlife Franklin residents enjoy. In less than four months I have obtained over 3000 pictures of animals: deer, grey squirrels, red squirrels, flying squirrels, hawks, owls, mice, wild turkeys, bluebirds, raccoons, opossums, cottontails (The New England Cottontail is currently a Candidate for the Endangered Species List), coyotes, bobcats, fishers, otters, red

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foxes, grey foxes, and more. I have also seen Sharp-Shinned Hawks, a State-Endangered Bird, frequenting the area. Sharp-Shinned Hawks require large blocks of forested area for suitable nesting areas. Recently, a juvenile Wood Turtle, a Species of Special Concern in CT, was found on the proposed Ash Dump site. It astounds me to think of how incredibly rich the land here must be to support such a biodiversity of life. Such biodiversity cannot be found everywhere and we should preserve areas such as this instead of contemplating covering the habitats with toxic ash that will eventually leak into the ground and pollute it and our groundwater beyond recovery.

This site in Franklin, for the reasons listed above and many more, is not the appropriate site for an Ash Dump. The criteria CRRA is basing its selection on are outdated. Most distressing to me, however, is the fact that some people, as Connecticut residents, and United States Citizens, feel that we need such places as Ash Dumps. Ash Dumps are "quick fixes" that offer no real solution to the mounting problems of what to do with the refuse of a burgeoning human population. Instead of fighting about which area of land we should next destroy with toxic ash, shouldn't we be implementing more sustainable solutions? Shouldn't we be requiring the manufacturers of goods to use less packaging materials that end up in incinerators or land-fills? Shouldn't we be building and purchasing quality "American Made" goods for ourselves and our children that are meant to last more than six hours to six months before they break? And shouldn't we be finding uses for whatever ash is left over instead of destroying our pristine lands?

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue.

Respectfully,

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