

Public Hearing at the Legislative Office Building
11:00am Friday February 13, 2009

First I would like to thank the environmental committee for giving me this opportunity to speak. My name is Susan Allen and I live in Franklin, CT. I come today to express my support of Senate Bill 3 and to voice my opposition to the Connecticut Resource and Recovery Authority's, CRRA's choice of location for an incinerator ash landfill in Franklin, CT.

I would like to preface my comments by informing the committee of others who are also against the proposed site in Franklin, many having to work today. I have with me a petition with 158 signatures of local residents vehemently opposed to the Ash landfill. I also have 51 handwritten letters from people in the region stating the negative impact this particular site would have on their lives. Finally, I was recently invited to share information about the proposed ash landfill at a Windham County Conservation Consortium meeting. This organization represents 15 towns in the region. They recently voted and approved to draft a letter to DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy denouncing this location. This proposed site would have a negative regional impact.

There is a litany of reasons why this site is wrong for a dump. However, in considerate of time constraints, I will elaborate on just two; still mentioning some of the others in list format at the end of the letter.

The first reason: It is extremely short sighted, and borders on arrogance, to site a landfill complete with toxic materials on top of a class A (drinkable as is) moderate to high-yield aquifer. In many parts of the world, large corporations are buying up water resources. They realize that clean water is an increasing scarce and valuable commodity. Just last summer, a neighboring town had only a 10 day supply of water left and other towns had shortages too. These were in 2008, what about the needs of future generations to come. It is ludicrous to endanger this precious resource because once it is compromised, there is no going back. And in my opinion, any aquifer testing done by CRRA, needs strict policing.

The second thing to elaborate on is the regional development of this area as an ecotourism destination. There has been much time, money, and effort into promoting the uniqueness of this area. The proposed site lies within 'The Last Green Valley' formally known as the 'Quinebaug-Shetucket National Heritage Corridor'. Congress designated national recognition for this area in 1994, enlarging it in 1999. This nationally recognized area keeps our state healthy by providing oxygen, filtering carbon dioxide, producing 1.4 million tons of topsoil each year, storing clean water, enhancing the health of Long Island Sound. These pristine forests and clean waterways lend themselves to a tremendous biodiversity in plants and animals. This area has seen the return of bear, moose, fishers, and sea lamprey which had been gone for generations. In fact a local fisherman believes that a pair of bald eagle, still an endangered species in CT, is nesting on the river side near the site. The Shetucket River which lies right next to the proposed site is a trophy trout river and the only river in the Eastern side of the state stocked with Atlantic Salmon. In other words...This area - It's a Jewel. As stewards of this land do we really want to place a toxic dump in the middle of it?

Other concerns:

A whole host of traffic issues - trucks will need to travel a narrow, accident prone, 2 lane community road to get to the site;
Archaeological issues - sites of foundations and a cemetery dating back to the 1700's and evidence of pre-1600's activity;
Agricultural concerns - pollutants in air currents depositing on hay fields, berry farms, livestock and big egg farms in the area;
Just to name a few.

Finally, Franklin is a small proud town where families live for generations. It is our town that will be left with the mess when CRRA finishes. And make no mistake it will be a mess - the EPA has acknowledged that all landfills will eventually leak and ash residue, the material CRRA wants to dump, used to be considered hazardous. In 1995, EPA lowered its standards (changed the test, not the material) to reclassify it to a lower status. And it is ironic because Franklin isn't even a member town of CRRA, yet we'll get the toxic tonic.

I don't have all the answers but it seems to make more sense to be looking at brown fields, using existing landfills like Putnam, incorporating new technology to update inefficient incinerators and processes for use of the ash, or better yet public campaigns promoting recycling and reducing packaging.

It is our duty to preserve this land with all of its natural resources, ones we need, for the next generation. Please have the foresight to do the right thing and support SB3.

Thank You! Susan E. Allen