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*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 16, 2009*

I appreciate the opportunity to support Senate Bill 918, An Act Requiring the Licensing of Private Solid Waste Haulers.

This proposal requires any private solid waste hauler with more than three trash hauling vehicles to obtain a license from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Prior to issuing such a license, the DEP must conduct a background check on the hauler's owner and key officers and directors.

The overwhelming majority of people in this industry are reputable and hard working law-abiding citizens, but major antitrust legal actions and organized crime prosecutions have shown serious problem. Some oversight is clearly appropriate. Provisions proposed in this measure establish civil penalties for solid waste hauler violations of environmental laws and also prohibit certain contractual provisions used to limit competitive offers or purchases from a competing firm.

These proposals are neither new nor novel. Several states and New York counties have enacted such provisions to combat illegal activity in the solid waste hauling industry.

Senate Bill 918 addresses a number of concerns expressed at last year's hearing regarding the impact on small businesses by requiring licensure only of companies that have more than three trash hauling vehicles. It also has no costly surety bond requirement.

For more than ten years, I have advocated licensing requirements for solid waste haulers, following our successful antitrust civil actions against the solid waste companies in the Hartford and Stamford areas. We recovered almost \$2 million in forfeitures and restitution. The cases we did in the early 1990's, in cooperation with the Department of Justice, involved illegality similar to the violations more recently prosecuted by federal authorities. I continue to investigate wrongdoing within this industry.

Connecticut needs an adequately funded system of licensing -- with thorough, comprehensive background checks. Licenses are already required for solid waste facilities and hazardous waste haulers. There would be significant economies of scale and efficiency in extending this licensing system to solid waste haulers.

I urge the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill 918.