



WILLIMANTIC
WASTE PAPER CO., INC.

P.O. Box 239, Recycling Way
Willimantic, CT 06226
Tel. 860-423-4527 • Fax 860-450-7551
www.williwaste.com

Specializing in Waste Management Solutions • Handling All Grades of Recyclables & Refuse

**Testimony of Thomas DeVivo, Vice President
Willimantic Waste Paper Company Inc.**
before the
**Legislative Program Review and Investigations
Committee**
Thursday, October 8, 2009

**Testimony of Thomas DeVivo, Vice President
Willimantic Waste Paper Company Inc.**
before the
Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee
Thursday, October 8, 2009

I thank the committee for this opportunity to comment on the Staff Briefing report regarding Municipal Solid Waste Services in Connecticut, dated today, and the issues addressed therein.

I am Vice President of Willimantic Waste Paper Company Inc., which has public and private customers mostly in Eastern Connecticut, but also including municipalities throughout the State. For example, we provide recycling services to the Cities of Stamford and New Haven. WWP is a family owned and (third-generation) managed Connecticut Corporation. We have over 250 employees and own and operate many DEP-Permitted recycling and waste facilities. We also provide a range of collection services to towns and individual customers. I would also note that all of the facilities we own and the related installed equipment have been privately financed by our family.

Our facilities include:

- A. We own and operate a newly refurbished single-stream recycling plant in Willimantic that has a very advanced processing system and that serves scores of municipal recycling programs;
- B. We own and operate;
 - i. a transfer station in Plainfield;
 - ii. a bulky waste rail transfer facility in Willimantic;
 - iii. an advanced construction and demolition waste (“C&D”) processing and recycling system in Willimantic;
 - iv. an MSW baling/transfer system in Willimantic; and,
 - v. a scrap metal recycling operation in Willimantic.
- C. We operate a fiber recycling facility that is leased from the City of Norwich; and,
- D. We operate a vehicle maintenance facility in Canterbury.

My remarks today are relatively brief, and intended to supplement the information and thoughts that were shared with Committee Staff as they met with us in the course of their work.

Single Stream Recycling

The report correctly indicates that single stream recycling, which is rapidly spreading throughout the State, has the potential to dramatically increase recycling rates. We invested many millions in new single-stream recycling equipment for our plant in Willimantic and now accept single-stream recyclables from many municipalities.

In part, one of the challenges of solid waste planning is to have only historical data as a guide, which can be misleading during times of rapid shifts in practices. This can be likened to driving down the road by looking only in the rear view mirror. We do know that our municipal customers are experiencing increased recycling tonnages, and are very pleased with single-stream system performance. There is every reason to believe that this technology, in combination with modern collection system performance will reduce the amount of waste disposed.

Also, there can be no doubt that one aspect of the current economic conditions is there is less waste of all types. Further, we continue to see shifts in packaging, the media industry, and similar trends that combine to significantly impact the nature and amount of our waste streams.

Consequently, we caution the Committee from reaching any particular conclusion at this time regarding the need for new disposal capacity in light of these ongoing changes, the full extent of which are yet to be measured.

Highly Competitive Marketplace

The urgency for a “governmental solution” to solid waste management and disposal has fallen away over the past thirty years. In the 1970’s, the main problem was the very creation of a solid waste disposal infrastructure so as to allow for the closure of many unlined, landfills throughout the State. Hence, CRRA was created and proved effective in bridging the gap from “every-town-has-a-landfill” to our modern network of transfer stations and RRFs.

However, today towns have many disposal options, both in-state and out-of-state. This was proven when many towns in the Southwest Region received multiple proposals from private companies, and realized a savings from opting not to continue with CRRA for a renewed phase in Bridgeport. Similarly, here in the greater Hartford area, CRCOG recently took qualification statements from those that might be interested in providing future solid waste services to municipalities now contracting with CRRA at Mid-Connecticut. Many firms, both in-state and out-of-state responded.

These experiences demonstrate the many public and private options now available for solid waste services. This competitive landscape can be expected to continue to yield benefits for towns and businesses in the State well into the future. Municipalities should continue to have the option to bid services and select the vendor of their choice – whoever it may be.

Licensing

Finally, I would like to comment on the recent State discussions regarding the need for DEP-sponsored licensing of waste haulers. One of the arguments licensing advocates have used, and which is contained in the report, is a need to get data regarding waste and recycling disposal practices. The concern is that haulers are not reporting where their waste or recyclables are delivered.

We don’t understand this argument. All of the waste and recyclables that our company collects are reported to DEP, since they are handled at DEP-permitted transfer stations, recycling facilities, and disposal sites (such as RRFs) and all of those facilities must report all tonnages incoming and destinations. No hauler would suffer the loss in productivity and cost of equipment, labor and fuel to drive a collection vehicle any distance to go to an out-of-state, non-reporting entity. Only in very limited border towns is that potentially a concern. Has DEP asked neighboring states to report inflows from our state?

Finally, the success of the State’s Attorney General and Federal agents handling the recent Danbury-area incident illustrates the strength of current laws. Although I am confident we would qualify in every way under any such licensing program, we do not support licensing because it would unnecessarily drive up the cost of doing business in the State without corresponding benefits to the public.

Thank you again for this opportunity.