

Capitol Region Council of Governments

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DATE: MARCH 9, 2010
TO: CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS OF THE ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
FROM: MELODY CURREY, CHAIRMAN, CRCOG POLICY BOARD
RICHARD BARLOW, SECRETARY, CRCOG POLICY BOARD
LYLE D. WRAY, PHD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: SENATE BILL NO. 415, AN ACT REVISING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONNECTICUT RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY BOARD AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STATUTE

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is a regional planning organization representing the City of Hartford and the 28 surrounding municipalities. We support the intent of Senate Bill No. 415 which would revise the make up of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) to provide increased representation by elected municipal officials on the Board. Of CRCOG's 29 towns, 26 members deliver waste to the CRRA Mid Connecticut Project.

Under the present statutory structure only five (5) members of the 11 members CRRA Board are required to be municipal officials. In addition, the statutes require that an additional two ad hoc members shall be appointed for each CRRA project of which one shall be a chief elected official. These ad hoc members shall only vote on matters concerning their specific project. Thus they are not empowered to vote on the overall operating budget of the CRRA. Senate Bill No. 415 (line 131) would change their authority to vote on all matters.

The Mid Connecticut Project is the largest of the CRRA projects providing service to 70 municipalities. Presently only two (2) of the five (5) municipal members are from Mid Conn municipalities with one municipal position on the Board vacant. Two other members of the Board are municipal officials but there is no requirement that they be such. One is appointed because of his expertise in the energy field and the other for his experience in the environmental field.

The member municipalities of CRCOG recognize that solid waste services represent a major component of their municipal budgets and as such they desire to have a more extensive role in the administration of the Project. After input from the member municipalities CRRA has in the last year established a Municipal Advisory Committee for the Mid Conn Project. That Committee as the name implies is only advisory and the CRRA Board has no obligation to follow the Committee's recommendations. At their meeting on March 3, 2010 the Committee passed a resolution that the Municipal

Advisory Committee supports the expansion of the CRRA Board to include Chief Elected Officials from all member towns.

It is important to the CRCOG members that the member municipalities be given more control of the Mid Connecticut Project as most of the contracts for services between the CRRA and member municipalities expire in 2012. At that time the member municipalities will have paid off the bonds for the Project and will have invested over \$12 million in improvements and upgrades to the facility paid from their tip fees. In preparation of that occurrence the CRCOG began discussions about solid waste options in 2008. CRCOG issued an RFP and secured consultant services which resulted in the completion in November 2008 of a report on potential options for solid waste services. CRCOG has concluded that the current CRRA is not adequately responsive to the needs of its members and has begun establishment of a Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority pursuant to Chapter 103b of the CGS.

CRCOG requests that Senate Bill No. 415 be revised to establish a new Mid Conn Project Board which is comprised of all member municipalities, and that an Executive Committee for the Project comprised of chief elected officials appointed by the member municipalities be created.

CRCOG thanks the Committee for raising Senate Bill No. 415 and looks forward to working with the Committee to make the changes which we have recommended.