



*City of Middletown
Public Works Department Recycling Division
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Environment Committee Public Hearing Monday, March 1, 2010

*Testimony in support of HB 5122 An Act Establishing a Paint Stewardship Pilot Program
Kim O'Rourke, Recycling Coordinator, City of Middletown*

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB 5122, An Act Establishing a Paint Stewardship Pilot Program. As a member of the CT Product Stewardship Council and the CT Recyclers Coalition, the City of Middletown is pleased to support this proposal with the changes outlined in this testimony.

This Paint Stewardship bill will move the State forward in developing more producer responsibility programs which offer stable financing and sound environmental management of waste products. Similar to the State's recent e-waste law, this bill will allow manufacturers to play a role in developing and financing a sound waste disposal program.

This bill is estimated to save CT municipalities over \$600,000 AND offer more opportunities for residents to dispose and recycle these products. Currently,

- only 18% of unused paint is brought to HHW collections each year;
- only oil based paint is accepted at HHW collections; latex paint must be dried out with kitty litter or sand, and put into the regular garbage;
- there are no sites that collect latex paint for recycling in CT;
- paint accounts for 30-50% of all municipal HHW collection costs.

The Paint Stewardship Program will:

- Save towns and taxpayers money; the city of Middletown spends \$15,000 a year on HHW collections. With this proposal, we expect costs to drop

and we expect MSW costs to drop due to less paint being dumped in the garbage;

- Increase recycling and collection of paint; currently the City only offers one collection in Middletown; residents can attend other collections in the spring and fall sponsored by MDC; this proposal will increase opportunities to dispose paint products and encourage people not to dump it in the garbage;
- Increase the types of products that can be collected and recycled;
- Promote producer responsibility of waste paint products;
- Make the collection and disposal of this paint more economical than it currently is. The industry estimates that it can handle current and additional materials for less than 25% of the current cost per can.

The City supports the following changes in language to this bill:

1. The program is created as a permanent program, not a pilot; other states and Canada have initiated these programs and we can benefit from their experience; a pilot isn't necessary.
2. The program should be designed to work within the current infrastructure as well as develop new outlets for disposing and recycling paint products.
3. Eliminate the specific stewardship assessment fee in the legislation and allow an independent annual audit to verify the stewardship fee.

This proposal will move the State forward in achieving creative, innovation solutions to waste management. All stakeholders will play a role to reduce waste, control costs and increase recycling. The absolutely wonderful part of this bill, is that it has the support of the paint industry, recycling and environmental groups, as well as numerous regional organizations and municipal governments. The Paint Stewardship Program will save taxpayers money, increase paint recycling and do it more effectively and economically than it is now being done.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. We hope to have your support for this proposal.

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