



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

March 8, 2010

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 93% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to testify before you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

Raised House Bill 5319 "An Act Concerning Recycling, Certain Solid Waste Management Reforms and Requirements for Solid Waste and Ash Residue Facilities."

This bill seeks to implement new requirements as a step towards increasing recycling across Connecticut.

CCM has worked with the Department of Environment Protection and proponents of similar bills to (i) help them fully understand its implications for local governments and (ii) ensure that it works for towns and cities and their property taxpayers.

Section 1

Would require DEP to review and update as needed, every ten years the list of items designated to be recycled.

In addition, this section would expand the list of items mandated to be recycled. After consulting the results of the DEP survey completed in 2009, it appears that those few towns that are not already handling these new items are on their way to doing so. However, we are concerned that municipalities might be faced with limited or no options for in-state disposal of the new items. The lack of in-state disposal options would require hauling these items to out-of-state facilities, which could outweigh any tip-fee savings achieved by eliminating them from the solid waste stream. In order to protect against this, *CCM urges the committee to have these new items be effective upon adequate and cost-effective in-state disposal options.* This could be accomplished in the same manner as is currently provided in SB 127 for composting "not later than six months after the establishment of service in the state by two or more facilities" – or – as provided in CGS 22a-256a for nickel-cadmium batteries that such items begin to be recycled "within three months of the establishment of service to such municipality by a regional processing center or local processing system."

This section should be amended to (1) provide that no new mandate on local governments be enacted through the regulatory process unless it is clear that in-state options are available and that the expanded requirements would not impose unreimbursed costs on towns and cities, and (2) that municipalities need not implement new mandatory requirements under this section if they have a negative impact on local budgets.

Section 2

Would require that any municipality providing curbside solid waste collection to also provide curbside recycling collection. DEP's 2009 survey indicates that this would not negatively affect any municipality – since

all of those who provide curbside collection do both solid waste and recycling. However, we are aware of at least one town – Lyme – that would be adversely affected by this new requirement. In Lyme, there is one company that residents can contract with to haul their solid waste. The residents pay the collection fee directly to the company but the town pays the tipping fees. Lyme has an exceptional transfer station where recyclables are collected and the town has consistently exceeded the statewide average for recycling. While the bill does provide a caveat that would exempt Lyme from this provision, *CCM is concerned that there may be other municipal programs that could be affected by this language and we urge you to amend it to protect against that possibility.*

Section 3

Would require certain common gathering venues “where designated recyclable items may be generated” to ensure that appropriate recycling containers are made available to the public.

CCM urges the committee to ensure that the onus of providing such recycling containers be on the entity that is “generating” the recyclables.

Section 4

Would require DEP to study and report on the cost and benefits to the State, municipalities and waste generators of different methods of removing food waste from the waste stream.

CCM supports this section.

Section 5

Would require *annual* registration of solid waste haulers with the municipality in which they collect. Current law already requires such haulers to register with the municipality initially. In addition, it requires municipalities annually report to DEP the collectors registered.

CCM urges that (1) the annual registration be at local option (to minimize administrative burdens) and (2) they need only make information available to DEP only when there are changes in the municipal registration list.

Section 8

Would require DEP to conduct a study of the potential beneficial use of ash residue. Currently, the disposal of ash residue is difficult and costly. Much of this waste must be transported out of state for disposal as there are insufficient in-state disposal options. Options for re-use would be cost-effective by helping to avoid costly disposal costs.

CCM supports this section.

CCM has always been supportive of measures that would encourage increased recycling in Connecticut and will work with proponents of this bill to gather need information to **ensure that no new unfunded mandates are implemented and the goals of the legislation are achieved without imposing unreimbursed costs on towns and cities.**

##

If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of
via email kweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 498-3026.