

Testimony of Donald W. Downes

on behalf of the Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority

before the Energy and Technology Committee

SB 102

This bill proposes an expansion of the definition of Class I renewable energy sources to include generation operated by water pollution control authorities fueled with biosolids.

From its inception, the underlying statute was designed to encourage and reward the use of renewable fuels in the generation of electricity. Beginning with the recognition of sources like solar and wind, the statute has been repeatedly updated as technology has moved forward, recognizing new renewable resources. The bill before you is simply the next step in that continuing evolutionary process.

As you know, the treatment of waste water inevitably produces biosolids which must be disposed of. The alternatives are landfill strategies or combustion. There is no landfill disposal in Connecticut, necessitating transportation to an out-of-state disposal site at considerable expense. Combustion has therefore become the disposal of choice. For the most part, the heat resulting from combustion has simply gone up the smokestack.

Today, there is technology to conduct a clean burn that is well within existing emissions standards and recaptures the resulting heat for further use. GNHWPCA already uses reclaimed heat for a number of processes including drying, heating, and the creation of additional fuel from fats, oils and greases. The generation of electricity is another process for which this heat can be used.

Because GHNWPCA is a public authority, any revenues realized from the sale of electricity will go directly to the reduction of rates charged to its customers from waste water treatment services.

Since the fuel for this generation is essentially free, the cost of electricity generated will be very low. This means the Authority can reduce its purchases of other, more costly power. This produces a direct savings to the Authority and their rate payers..

The generation of electricity will also protect the authority against disruptions in power - a critical issue in facilities like waste water treatment plants where service to its waste water treatment customers cannot be interrupted.

In conclusion, extension of Class I status to this kind of generating source is not only consistent with the language of the statute, but also with the public policy behind the statute - the creation of electricity from renewable sources for the benefit of society as a whole. The extension of the credit to this kind of generation will prompt all waste water treatment entities to adopt biosolid disposal strategies to claim the credit, which will provide more renewable energy and increase efficiency. The net effect will be lower prices for everyone.