

## **Council 4 AFSCME Testimony – March 17, 2011**

Good afternoon Chairman Fonfara, Chairman Nardello and members of the Energy Committee. My name is Gil Bironi. I am the president of Local 184, whose members have kept the Mid-Connecticut Project up and running for the past 28 years.

I am here to testify in favor of to **SB 1167, An Act Concerning the Mid-CT Trash to Energy Facility and SB 1170, An Act Concerning the Membership of the CT Resources Recovery Authority's Board of Directors.**

SB 1167 asks OPM to review and come up with ideas for assigning administration of the Mid-CT Project to a public entity. This is a good idea as CRRA seems almost to be an undefined agency. When it suits CRRA's president and chairman they say that CRRA is a quasi-public, whatever that is, or a state agency. It really is a state agency, but one that remains at arms length from state oversight. This has caused real problems, as we have seen with the Enron scandal under past management, and a serious of odd and damaging actions under the current management.

It would make sense to have the last publicly owned part of the valuable public trash to energy infrastructure under public control. If CRRA is allowed to continue stewardship of this infrastructure, the public will be exposed to sharply rising trash disposal and recycling rates. Also, as we have seen with this week's explosion at the Bristol Resources Recovery plant, these plants are potentially dangerous. Mid-CT is far larger than the

Bristol plant. It is geographically located in the center of a major population zone. There is a 5 million gallon tank of high octane aviation fuel on the facility grounds. CRRA is currently trying to privatize the operation of the Mid-CT Project to NAES, a Japanese subsidiary corporation that has never run such a plant. They are also trying to privatize our members out of their jobs at this plant. Our workers have run the RDF part of this plant so well that by CRRA's own admission they have added years of life to it, well beyond its expected facility life.

Also, the CRRA was established as a development authority, not as a facility operator. Perhaps, CRRA's poor stewardship of resource recovery facilities may be linked to this. Mr. Anderson intends to talk about this history.

SB 1170 provides for more direct representation on the CRRA board through elections by member towns representatives. This can only help to make the CRRA more accountable. It also seems to incorporate the resolution of CRRA's Mid-CT Project Advisory Committee, which shows that town leaders lack faith in CRRA's current operation.

I would be happy to answer any questions.