



**CONNECTICUT
RESOURCES
RECOVERY
AUTHORITY**

CONNECTICUT'S RECYCLING LEADER

Testimony of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority

From: Paul Nonnenmacher, Director of Public Affairs

Before the Energy & Technology Committee

Re: **Raised Bill No. 1167, AN ACT CONCERNING THE MID-CONNECTICUT TRASH TO ENERGY FACILITY**

March 17, 2011

Submitted via e-mail to david.macdonald@cga.ct.gov

Representative Nardello, Senator Fonfara and members of the Energy & Technology Committee:

Please accept for the record my testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority on Raised Bill 1167, *An Act Concerning the Mid-Connecticut Trash-to-Energy Facility*.

As you know, the General Assembly created CRRA in 1973 to modernize the state's solid waste management, moving Connecticut from a patchwork of old town dumps in which waste was buried forever to a system of trash-to-energy and recycling. In Connecticut, garbage isn't garbage, it is a resource – to generate renewable electricity or to reclaim and sell as raw materials for the manufacture of new products. What's more, before this decade is out, Connecticut will be the first state in the nation to have no active municipal solid waste landfills.

The cornerstone of CRRA's infrastructure is the Mid-Connecticut trash-to-energy facility here in Hartford. With this publicly owned facility, since 1988 we have provided safe, reliable trash disposal to 70 cities and towns – all priced at our net cost of operation – under contracts between CRRA and the municipalities that expire in 2012. We have just offered those towns the option to renew their existing agreements or sign new ones. Because we will have paid off our bonds, our costs of operating the plant will be lower and we will be able to sell our power for a higher price, those new agreements offer significant reductions in disposal fees, promising real savings to our cash-strapped communities.

A part of CRRA's history – the ill-fated Enron deal – is, unfortunately, all too well-known. But in 2002, the Legislature created a new CRRA board, which took an agency that was close to bankruptcy – which would have been a disaster for the state's finances – and has made it operationally strong, financially sound and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

Under our new board's leadership, CRRA introduced single-stream recycling to Connecticut, and that's been another success story. At a time when the state's recycling rates are stagnating, single-stream has increased the recycling of our towns by 14 percent in the last three years. And while trash generation has been declining due to the economy, our recycling has increased every year since 2006.

Part of our success in recycling is the result of another service CRRA provides that is, to our knowledge, unique among public solid-waste agencies. Each year, we teach more than 50,000 school children and adults about recycling, energy conservation, preservation of natural resources and other aspects of what we today call "sustainability" with the award-winning education programs offered through our Trash Museum here in Hartford and our Garbage Museum in Stratford.

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CRRA has always been eager to focus the Legislature's attention on the important issue of environmentally sound waste management and, in particular, the importance of publicly owned infrastructure such as our Mid-Connecticut system. We have always been happy to help with studies of the solid-waste system, most recently with the exhaustive study the Program Review & Investigations Committee staff undertook in 2008 and 2009. Today we stand ready and willing to help the Office of Policy & Management with its review of the Mid-Connecticut system as spelled out in Raised Bill No. 1167.

CRRA is also ready to answer any questions Committee members or staff may have or to provide any additional information they need. Please contact me directly at 860-757-7771 or pnonnenmacher@crra.org.