

TESTIMONY ON RAISED H.B. 5118 AN ACT CONCERNING THE
RECLASSIFICATION OF TRASH-TO-ENERGY FACILITIES AS CLASS 1
RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Environment Committee March 1, 2012
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Chairman, Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority

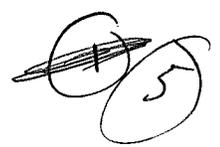
I support the intent of Raised H.B. No. 5118 which would grant any trash-to-energy facility located in the state status as a Class 1 renewable energy source. Given the significant positive fiscal impact this bill would have on municipal budgets I recommend that the bill be effective on passage.

The recent changes in the energy market brought on by the introduction of cheap natural gas to our region have caused the market value of the energy generated by the state's resource recovery facilities to free fall. These facilities depend heavily on the sale of the energy generated to offset the tip fees charged to their municipal customers.

I am sure that you will receive extensive testimony from others providing specific details of the problem the dramatic decline in energy revenues is causing Connecticut's cities and towns. I, however, would like to present a brief history of the state's solid waste program and the impacts that will be caused by the failure to enact H.B. 5118. As the former Chief of the Waste Management Bureau of the Department of Environmental Protection from the late 1980's through 2002 I am more than qualified to provide this incite.

Public Act 85-436, now codified as Chapter 446d of the CGS, established the modern requirement for the adoption by the then Commissioner of Environmental Protection of the first State-wide solid waste management plan. Public Act 85-436 was the result of recognition by the General Assembly that a comprehensive environmentally and economically sound state wide approach to the disposal of solid waste was necessary. Our historic practice of town dumps was no longer environmentally acceptable and the siting of new modern landfills in the State was proving impossible.

In Public Act 85-436 the General Assembly said first that Connecticut needed to be self sufficient in our solid waste disposal practices by not relying on other states to take our wastes. Secondly, the priority for management of solid waste was to follow the hierarchy of the specific goals of source reduction, recycling, composting of yard waste or vegetable matter, bulky waste recycling, resource recovery or waste-to-energy plants, incineration and lastly landfilling.



Upon adoption of the first plan the DEP moved in the early 1990's to close the remaining solid waste landfills in the State. The alternative was to force municipalities to join the resources recovery facilities which were being constructed by the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority. In order to make these environmentally sound facilities economically viable compared to the existing municipal dumps the value of the energy generated was subsidized. The plan worked and our old dumps are a distance memory. Connecticut now boasts the highest rate of solid waste directed to resource recovery of any state in the country.

Today as an elected municipal official I can tell you that faced with dramatic increases in the cost of municipal solid waste disposal caused by the decrease in energy revenues at our resources recovery facilities municipalities will abandon these environmentally sound facilities for cheaper out of state landfills. The state will no longer be self sufficient in solid waste disposal but will rely on private facilities regulated by other states. Finally, the environmentally based hierarchy of solid waste management so wisely established by the General Assembly will be destroyed.