



**TESTIMONY TO THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
AGAINST CLASSIFYING TRASH TO ENERGY AS A CLASS I RENEWABLE ENERGY
RESOURCE (HB 5118)**

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Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, distinguished members of the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Louis Burch, program coordinator for Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). CCE is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to protect public health and the natural environment. **CCE is testifying today in opposition to HB 5118- AAC the reclassification of trash to energy facilities as Class I renewable energy sources.**

Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) was created to promote clean energy technologies and wean the state off of dirty fuel sources. **Trash incineration is intended primarily as a method of solid waste disposal, not for use as a renewable energy resource.** Garbage may be plentiful, but it is not a renewable natural resource. CCE strongly encourages the Connecticut General Assembly to focus the state's resources on energy efficiency and true renewable technologies, such as solar and wind. The goal of the RPS is to promote clean, environmentally responsible energy technologies, not to provide subsidies for solid waste management.

Allowing garbage incineration to be eligible as a Class I renewable energy source will only serve to shift the state's focus away from authentic renewable energy resources such as wind and solar. Adding new, non-renewable sources as Class I sources would adversely impact the state's ability to meet its goal of deriving 20% of Connecticut's energy supply from *clean* renewable energy, by removing stability for developers in the renewable energy market.

While burning garbage is touted as a clean, renewable energy resource by the industry, this could not be further from the truth. **Garbage incineration facilities emit significant amounts of mercury, lead, cadmium, dioxin, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and acid gases.** Last year, Covanta Energy Corporation was fined \$400,000 for a 2010 violation of air quality standards at their Wallingford incineration facility. Dioxin/furan levels in the exhaust stream were found to be more than 250 times greater than the allowable limits, prompting the State of Connecticut to order the shutdown of Covanta's Wallingford facility pending a series of

modifications and rigorous emissions testing.¹ This was Covanta's second violation of this kind in three years.

Classifying garbage as renewable energy provides a counterproductive incentive to generate more waste, and works against Connecticut's solid waste goals. Connecticut should be working toward reducing, not increasing, solid waste. Connecticut's solid waste management plan sets a goal of reducing solid waste to 58% by the year 2024. The current recycling rate has remained stagnant at about 24.5% since 2009. The CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) asserts that if the 58% reduction in solid waste is not achieved by 2024, there will be a significant shortfall of municipal solid waste disposal capacity in Connecticut².

While garbage incineration remains a solid waste management option for Connecticut it is not a renewable resource; and should not be included in the RPS, particularly in the Class I tier. Increasing the privileges associated with garbage incineration will not create the incentive needed to increase recycling rates throughout Connecticut, will reduce the amount of energy produced from true renewable resources, and will increase harmful emissions. CCE supports a definition of renewable energy that does not include garbage incineration and **urges the Environment Committee to oppose HB 5118- AAC.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

Respectfully submitted,

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Program Coordinator

¹ <http://www.ct.gov/dep/cwp/view.asp?A=4013&Q=483234> s

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http://www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/waste_management_and_disposal/solid_waste_management_plan/swmp_final_chapters_and_execsummary.pdf