

Testimony of Roger Smith, Clean Water Action, Environment Committee

Testimony in Opposition to

HB 5118: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECLASSIFICATION OF TRASH-TO-ENERGY FACILITIES AS CLASS I RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES.

We ask the legislature to protect the integrity of Class I of the renewable portfolio standard. The intention of this Renewable Portfolio Standard is to drive the development for new, clean renewable energy sources. It can only deliver on its goal of creating financial incentives to build more renewable energy if the definitions remain stable. We urge you not to use energy policy to undermine the state's solid waste management policy.

From an energy perspective, we ask you to reject any proposals to add trash incineration, sewage sludge incineration, or anything else that is not a clean source of renewable electricity generation to Class I. The demand for these renewable energy credits is set by law and the value of them is determined by the supply. The more types of energy sources that qualify, the lower the incentive for them all.

Sources like trash incineration, old hydro and sludge incineration are pre-existing and if they are allowed to earn Class I credits will do nothing to support *new* sources of clean energy or provide additional environmental benefits. It is a waste of ratepayer dollars to subsidize the status quo.

From a waste perspective, the state's solid waste management plan has ambitious and achievable goals to double the state's rate of recycling and diversion of waste materials from landfilling and incineration. Putting incineration in Class I would send a financial signal to towns to build more trash incinerators and burn more trash, which undermines the state's solid waste management goals.

There are smart new strategies to reduce waste management costs for towns, reduce pollution and create jobs. CT has made exciting strides towards increased manufacturer responsibility for waste like electronics. Connecticut is poised to make composting and biogas digestion feasible to dispose of organic waste like food scraps and lawn clippings. These strategies will reduce disposal costs to towns while creating jobs and growing new industries. Wet waste like food scraps lowers the efficiency of trash incinerators and increases emissions. We need to be smarter with our state waste policy and follow the lead of states like Rhode Island which are embracing this portfolio of approaches rather than clinging to burial and burning as our primary approaches.

Thank you for your consideration,

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