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

Environment Committee Public Hearing March 2, 2012
Submitted by John E. Adams, First Selectman, Town of Granby

As First Selectman of the Town of Granby, Vice Chairman of the Capital Region Council of Governments, a member of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority Mid Connecticut Project and as a member of the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority, I support the intent of Raised Bill No. H.B. 5118.

Connecticut's Solid Waste Management Plan, revised in 2006, calls for source reduction, recycling, composting, and energy recovery from solid waste, while relying on landfill disposal as a last resort. It also calls for enhanced funding mechanisms to plan and implement the Plan. Supporting the change in status of electricity generated at Connecticut's trash-to-energy facilities is consistent with the State's Solid Waste Master Plan and good for the municipalities and citizens of this state.

As a result of decades of planning and development, Connecticut has become the State that is most reliant on waste-to-energy facilities. In FY2005, 57 percent of municipal solid waste was burned in the state's six waste-to-energy facilities. Thirty percent was recycled. The remainder was either buried in Connecticut's landfills or transported out-of-state to landfills and other facilities.

To continue to support the Solid Waste Plan, waste-to-energy facilities must remain cost competitive. As municipalities struggle to make ends meet, we cannot afford to be spending more than is absolutely required to dispose of our municipal solid waste. Granby recycles a tremendous amount of our total waste which has helped us to keep our solid waste costs level over the past few years. Through the qualifications process that the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority implemented in 2011, Granby chose CRRA to continue to manage our MSW and recyclables. We felt over the life of the contract, using projected rates, it made economic sense for us to continue with CRRA.

However with the new energy pricing recently received by CRRA, the reimbursement they receive for energy produced has declined as a result of competition from natural gas fired power plants. Making the energy a Class I renewable energy source under Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standard would increase the value of the energy produced and make waste-to-energy facilities in Connecticut cost competitive with out-of-state landfill disposal.

I urge the legislature to adopt this revision. It is consistent with the State's Solid Waste Plan, and will continue to fund the State's efforts in source reduction, recycling and composting. It will also continue to make waste disposal affordable to Connecticut's communities.