

Testimony from Jeff Holland
New Canaan resident and Pilot Medication Drop Box Program Participant

Committee on Environment
Re: Raised Bill 92
Public Hearing February 22, 2012

Senator Meyer and Environment Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Respectfully I wish to express my opposition to Section 2 of Raised Bill 92.

As a New Canaan resident and EMT, I participated in a very successful pilot of a now established Medication Drop Box program, and although I agree that this is a very important program, I do not agree that it should be mandated, or now managed under the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Although the impact of waste pharmaceuticals in the environment is still not clearly understood, one thing is certain, the diversion and abuse of these drugs is creating a public health crisis. Drug overdose has now overtaken automobile crashes as the leading cause of accidental death in the US, due largely to a surge in overdoses involving prescription painkillers. For this reason I believe that this program should continue to be under the auspices of the very capable staff at DCP and the Prescription Monitoring Program, with assistance from the Regional Action Councils.

I have found that at least forty states already have local take back programs, with communities in thirty-two states using the drop box model, some for several years. Although a few states have introduced legislation to fund these programs through fines or manufacturer stewardship requirements, I know of none that mandate the drop box program itself.

Last July I had the opportunity to hear DEEP Commissioner Esty speak at Sherwood Island State Park. I was encouraged to hear how his office would be doing more with less, by focusing on what they do best-protecting the environment, and not on regulation that adds no value. On the specific issue of pollution control, he spoke of how they are moving away from the command and control model, towards incentivizing people to do what is right.

I believe that out of a respect for our environment, paired with an awareness of the dangers of abuse, these drop box programs will continue to be established on their own, with people doing what is right for all the right reasons. I do not believe that a mandated program adds any value. I therefore ask that you not include section 2 of this bill.

Thank you again for your consideration of my testimony.