

Testimony of  
Sharon E. Lewis  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee  
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Written Testimony Concerning Governor's Bill 6360 AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF CONNECTICUT'S COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY STRATEGY. educate members in many environmental health issues, including asthma risks and triggers, toxic substances, and health effects of trash incineration.

Senator Duff, Representative Reed and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bills 6360, 6532 and 6535.

My name is Sharon Lewis and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition of Environmental Justice or CCEJ. At CCEJ we are diligently working to create a world where no group of people, -racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group -bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, or commercial operations. We advocate for equitable policies and practices that promote healthy communities.

Some of our work includes fighting to reduce emissions of outdoor air pollutants in communities with high exposure because we believe that poor air quality contributes to a myriad of health problems such as asthma. Our asthma education and outreach efforts through our asthma speakers bureau educates thousands of Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven residents about asthma treatment options, and how managing indoor and outdoor environments can help control the condition. We have also been active educating residents in major Connecticut cities on the public health benefits of recycling, and most importantly we have played a major role closing trash incinerators and curtailing industrial pollution near major cities in this state. We are currently trying to shutdown one of the boilers at Hartford's trash-to-energy incinerator, the nation's 5<sup>th</sup> largest, which operates 24/7 and is a major source of pollution which releases many dangerous chemicals such as dioxin and mercury to name a few.



I've come here today in fear that Connecticut, in an effort to increase our reported percentage of "clean energy", is going to dilute the definition of a Class 1 Renewable. First and foremost, the idea that trash incineration will somehow be in the same category and receive comparable funding as true clean energies such as solar and wind is disturbing. Wind and solar energy don't release toxins into the air, and cities and regions that use wind and solar power don't have abnormal amounts of asthma and toxic-poison related deaths.

Secondly, diluting the definition of a

Class 1 to include trash incineration would only undermine the hard work of Hartford city residents and the Connecticut Coalition of Environmental Justice to make this city a cleaner and healthier place to live and work.

Trash incineration leads to a whole host of negative environmental and health impacts and these effects disproportionately burden urban city dwellers who lack the money and political power to deter industries from building incinerators in their backyards. Please don't weaken the meaning of a Class 1 renewable to include trash incineration!

On a different note, I am very happy to hear that Connecticut is continuing to develop its energy efficiency programs. I was born and raised in Hartford and I can tell you that the Hartford housing stock is some of the oldest in the state and as such, in need of major energy saving construction. I fully support measures to increase our energy efficiency programs especially if they address the needs of low-income and hard-to-reach populations like senior citizens.

Thank you.