

TESTIMONY OF RICHARD J. BARLOW
ON RAISED BILL NO. 6531
AN ACT PRESERVING AND RETAINING THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF IN-STATE RESOURCES
RECOVERY FACILITIES

Submitted to the Energy and Technology Committee
March 7, 2013

Good morning, Senator Duff, Representative Reed, members of the Energy and Technology Committee. My name is Richard J. Barlow. By way of background I am the First Selectman of the Town of Canton, a recently appointed Director of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority and a Co-Chair of the Governor Malloy's Modernizing Recycling Working Group. I am also a former Chief of the Waste Management Bureau of the then Department of Environment Protection. I am here today to speak in support of Raised Bill No. 6531, An Act Preserving and Retaining The Environmental Benefits Of In-State Resources Recovery Facilities.

In the 1970's Connecticut made a commitment in its state solid waste planning to establish a hierarchy for waste management which includes first reuse, followed by recycling, organic composting, resources recovery and as a last resort landfilling. The goal of the State was to eliminate the landfilling of municipal solid waste (MSW) in favor of more environmentally sound resources recovery facilities or as they are often called waste-to-energy facilities. At the same time the General Assembly adopted legislation to insure that the State was self-sufficient in MSW disposal and not relying on out-of-state facilities to meet our disposal needs.

Over the last forty years Connecticut has closed all but one town MSW landfill which has improved and protected the environment of the State. Today Connecticut remains not only a national but world-wide leader in the percentage of MSW diverted from landfills to resources recovery facilities. Resource recovery facilities rely on both the revenues from tipping fees charged for disposal and revenues from energy sales. The ratio varies from 40-60% to 60-40% depending on the facility. The recent abundance of natural gas has driven down the energy costs significantly affecting the revenues for the State's resources recovery facilities. Others testifying today will provide specific financial information on this impact.

Without a means to insure higher revenues for energy sales the State's resources recovery facilities are at risk of closure. Raised Bill No. 6531 will allow these facilities to remain in operation for a transition period until the recommendations of the Governor's Modernizing Recycling Work Group have been implemented which will reduce the future need for resources recovery capacity in the State.

I am here to speak to the broader policy impacts which will occur without passage of this Bill. The first impact will be that in order to keep tip fees down municipalities will choose to use cheaper out-of-state landfills for disposal of their MSW. This will violate both the waste management hierarchy and self-sufficiency principles so wisely adopted by the General Assembly. The use of landfills will expose municipalities to potential future liabilities for any long term environmental consequences such as those still being paid by some Connecticut municipalities which used out of state landfills that ultimately

became Federal Superfund sites. From an environmental standpoint the use of these out-of-state landfills will result in a greater carbon footprint caused by increased truck transportation.

Many environmentalists will argue that the use of renewable energy credits for resources recovery generated energy is not appropriate as these facilities are not clean sources. However, as reported in "Clearing the Air" in the Fall 2012 publication of Renewable Energy from Waste the combustion of mixed waste results in the emission of 2,988 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt hour. This is higher than competing fossil fuel: Coal: 2249 pounds per MWH; Oil; 1672 pounds per MWH and Natural Gas: 1135 pounds per MWH. However if you assume as the US EPA does that roughly 55 percent of mixed MSW is biogenic and therefore carbon neutral, combustion of MSW results in the lowest emissions at 1016 pounds per MWH. I submit that the environmental benefits of the retention of the state solid waste policies so wisely established by the General Assembly more than offset the concern that resources recovery should be classified as renewable energy sources.

In conclusion, I urge your support of Raised Bill No. 6531. I would be pleased to answer any questions.