

Environmental Committee

March 21, 2013

Regarding Bill #1081 – An Act Concerning Recycling And Jobs:

There are several important issues addressed in Bill #1081. First and foremost, the Bill seems to be a recognition that burning waste (municipal solid waste/MSW), using 'gasification' to dispose of waste (MSW) and landfills are now recognized as a detriment to our community, the environment and the world in general. The Bill also seems to make it clear that landfills should be going the way of dinosaurs just like burning and gasification (gasification is primarily the burning of plastics, that could have been recycled, in order to create the enormous amount of heat required for the 'vaporizing' of limited types of MSW). What is missing from the Bill is a new concept called "Zero Waste". Zero Waste means that all waste is a valuable commodity that should be considered for recycling and none of it should be burned, gassified or sent to a landfill. The EPA has produced information indicating that for every 1 job created in a landfill, 20 jobs are lost. Why? Because if all the waste were to be recycled and 'diverted' from landfills, burning and gasification, 20 jobs would be created recycling the same waste into new products. This does not even take into consideration the amount of new money that would be circulated as a direct result of those new jobs. Composting is another issue that is sorely misunderstood but well addressed in this Bill. It feels good to say that "I am for composting". The problem is that most garbage contains elements that contaminate soil and must be removed before 'compost' can be used as fertilizer or else you pollute the very land you are covering with compost. The term 'Diversion Rate' is important in this discussion and Bill. The Diversion Rate is simply the amount of garbage (MSW) that is not sent to (diverted from) a landfill, burning or gasification site. The higher the 'Diversion Rate' the less garbage (MSW) is disposed of uselessly and the most garbage is recycled. Putting current laws aside for the moment, Connecticut does not have a high Diversion Rate. Most States do not. New York, according to it's own figures, has a Diversion Rate less than 50%. So the ultimate solution is to put in place a system that converts garbage to energy (without burning), does not require people to separate their garbage (MSW), which they do not do anyway, and has a very high Diversion Rate – that also eliminates most toxins from the garbage after it has been converted to energy. Such a system exists. It is called a 'Steam Conversion' system. It uses high tech computers to run a low tech steam system that accepts all garbage (MSW), converts the carbon based MSW to an organic fiber and separates, delables and sterilizes all the recyclable materials. The fiber is then combined with solid human waste to create copious amounts of inexpensive, valuable natural gas (CH₄) using an accelerated anaerobic digestion system. The state and or it's municipalities have an enormous new source of revenue from MSW and solid human waste (which used to be an expense), the need for landfills is eliminated, there is no need for burning or gasification and enormous amounts of natural gas is created. Bill # 1081 seems to address many of these issues and is well thought out when it comes to that which it would like to achieve. Now, the people of Connecticut must decide how to accomplish these most important goals as elucidated by this Bill. The solution is readily available right now. My suggestion is that in order to execute that which is called for in the Bill, the solution must be implemented that will help the State achieve it's well illustrated goals as described in the Bill.

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