



My name is Robert Facey. I am president of an Council 4 AFSCME local, which represents Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) workers. Gil Bironi and Tom Raffa, who are also presidents of MDC Council 4 worker locals are with me. We are here to testify on behalf of the hardworking AFSCME employees who spent a good deal of their working years making sure that the trash to energy plant known as the Mid-Connecticut Project was operated efficiently, safely and without interruption for over 26 years. I am addressing **Senate Bill 27, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Recycling Management Strategy**.

By way of background, the MDC and its collective bargaining employees provided services to the Mid-Connecticut trash to energy plant managed by CRRA from 1984 through the end of 2011. The MDC charged CRRA for the actual cost of the services rendered, which included the actual cost of salary and benefits. The MDC did not receive any profit from its efforts, but instead was supposed to be wholly protected from any cost related to the provision of services. Although the expiration and non-renewal of the MDC contract removed the MDC from the day to day operation of the plant, it did not eliminate the continued liability for post-termination and post-employment benefits owed to MDC employees working at the plant. CRRA specifically, and the state generally, benefited from the efforts of these workers, and they should be responsible for their earned benefits. The issue is the subject of a pending arbitration proceeding. Despite efforts by CRRA to delay that proceeding, it is my understanding that the case will be considered sometime within the next month.

In the meantime, CRRA has run at a loss, spending well over a hundred million dollars of its reserves to support its operations. CRRA has failed to maintain its customer base even with the reserve subsidy, losing hundreds of thousands of tons of waste stream. CRRA has not been able to maintain energy sales prices, and is projecting enormous losses from this source of decreased revenue. In fact, at recent public meetings, the chairman of CRRA has warned that unless it is further subsidized by the state, CRRA will fail. CRRA has admitted that it is dissipating its assets in an effort to stay afloat. The Governor's office has demanded a complete forensic audit of CRRA before any assistance is provided. In the face of this demand, the Chief Financial Officer for CRRA resigned.

With this background, the Governor has proposed SB 27 which as I read the bill, replaces CRRA with another quasi-public entity with an emphasis on recycling and proposes to revise the state's waste management plan. Before we do this, we need a comprehensive study of why CRRA failed, what technologies are available for solid waste management, and what role the public sector should play in this arena before going forward. The mistakes that lead to the apparent demise of CRRA should not be repeated. It appears CRRA was accountable to no one. Changing the name and reconstituting the board does not address the incompetent management of this organization. Revamping the state's solid waste management plan will not, in and of itself, solve our waste management problems. Let's look at how we got here...and under no circumstances should CRRA be allowed to shirk its obligations to the men and women who worked at the Mid-Connecticut Plant.

