



Pedro E. Segarra
Mayor

Testimony: Governor's Bill No. 27

Chairman Meyer, Chairwoman Gentile and Members of the Environment Committee:

I am Pedro E. Segarra, Mayor of the City of Hartford. On behalf of the citizens of Hartford, I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to support proposed Governor's Bill No. 27: An Act Concerning Connecticut's Recycling and Materials Management Strategy and to offer, for your consideration, suggestions that may strengthen GB 27.

The City of Hartford has been the host community for both the Mid-Connecticut Project's waste-to-energy plant and to the now-closed Hartford landfill where hundreds of communities and haulers have deposited municipal and bulky waste from throughout the region for decades. Hundreds of trucks travel daily through our city to deliver waste that is then processed within Hartford's boundaries both at the Mid-Connecticut plant and other waste processing facilities that call Hartford home.

On March 5, 2014 the EPA commemorated twenty years since former President Bill Clinton issued an executive order calling on agencies to address environmental justice impacts and noting that low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, and tribal lands have experienced disparities as related to waste handling and environmental practices within their communities.

Recently, President Obama renewed Clinton's executive order calling together agencies to work on the issue after a 10-year lull. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, former Connecticut DEEP Commissioner, recently reiterated the point that many urban communities continue to face disproportionate environmental impacts. It is therefore essential for urban centers, such as Hartford, Bridgeport, and Waterbury, to play a very special role in the dialogue about changes in waste management policies and practices as outlined in GB27.

I share the following recommendations for strengthening GB 27:

- 1) **I support the restructuring of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA), the revision of its role in waste management planning, and the reduction of its staff and its scope of work.** However, it is important to provide a transition plan for the governance of the Materials Innovation Recycling Authority (MIRA) that provides some continuity and also assures a meaningful Board role for the City of Hartford. The transition plan must also protect established agreements between Hartford and CRRA and define the status of existing contracts with member communities.

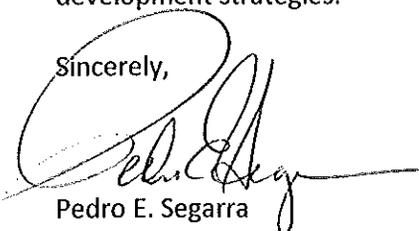
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- 2) I support the concept of re-purposing the Mid-Connecticut facility. I urge that any new technology and facility be developed in the context of a solid waste master plan that considers the needs of all Connecticut municipalities and commercial haulers and distributes costs statewide. It is also essential that GB27 contain a requirement to negotiate an equitable host community Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement that addresses traffic, emissions and other environmental impacts to the city of Hartford where this facility is expected to be sited.
- 3) The "Request for Proposal" process for repurposing the current facility requires some modification to ensure that MIRA stakeholders and end users are a significant part of the development of the "Scope of Work" and specifications. It is prudent for the bill to make stakeholders a part of the evaluation and selection team associated with this project. Public input through informational hearings is also necessary. I also respectfully request consideration be given to the possible criticism the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) may face if it assumes a role in commissioning a project and also approving and regulating it.
- 4) I support the creation of the Connecticut Recycling Foundation. The Foundation must have diverse leadership and involvement from all waste and materials management sectors. It should establish a statewide and common educational program to inspire aggressive movement toward achieving the ambitious 60% recycling goal set out in GB 27. The Foundation, in concert with the proposed new Solid Waste Management Plan, should push forward to modernize waste infrastructure, expand into organics, construction, and demolition recycling and continue product stewardship policies that involve producers in end-of-life management or product redesign.
- 5) Finally, as Mayor of the City of Hartford, I understand the significant costs associated with waste management collection and disposal. It is in the best interest of all communities to reduce costs while improving the environment and expanding green economic opportunities. Over the last six years, Hartford has willingly initiated pilot projects that have promoted single stream recycling and product stewardship legislation related to mattress recycling. However, communities need grants in order to study their local practices and to help identify and implement new practices that will lead to the 60% diversion goal. GB27 authorizes grants to municipalities as incentives for diversion and I support this inclusion.

GB27 is legislation that resulted from countless hours of thoughtful analysis and deliberation by many municipal officials, commercial haulers, waste facility representatives, and environmental groups who served on various task forces and working committees over the past two years. The collective research, compilation of opinions from public hearings, and knowledge from waste industry experts and consultants has been incorporated into GB27.

I support modifications that will strengthen GB27 and support passage of the intended strategy of this legislation—to take Connecticut from a state of managing waste to one of managing materials in a fashion that firmly supports environmental protection through technical innovation and economic development strategies.

Sincerely,



Pedro E. Segarra
Mayor