



# State of Connecticut

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In Support of:

S.B. No. 442 An Act Providing Funds for the Garbage Museum in Stratford

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban and members of the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. No. 442 An Act Providing Funds for the Garbage Museum in Stratford.

When in operation, the Garbage Museum was a unique educational environment that encouraged children and families to learn about the process and value of recycling, and inspired youth to appreciate and practice a lifetime of smart recycling habits. The museum was sadly forced to close in August 2011 due to a lack of funding. By using tipping fees to direct the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority to reopen the museum, we would be able to restore an important attraction and scholastic resource to the community.

In 2010, the museum provided educational services to over 30,000 adults and children through museum visits and outreach programming. For those of you who have never visited the museum, I can tell you it was a very unique and special environment.

The centerpiece of the museum featured a towering "Trash-o-saurus," a sculpture made from a ton of trash. Children of all ages loved seeing the giant dinosaur almost touching the high ceiling, but it also had a deeper meaning. On average, each person throws away one ton of trash annually. So, the Trash-o-saurus gave visitors a visual of the amount of trash each person makes every year - a truly staggering amount.

Guests at the museum were also able to walk through a giant compost pile, learn about the compost process and learn how recycling produces energy. You could even watch recycling technology sort garbage and transform trash into reusable material.

The museum was originally funded by the Southwest Connecticut Recycling Committee, a group of 19 local municipalities that sent recyclables to the regional recycling facility and supported the museum through deposit fees. In 2009, about half of those municipalities pulled out of the group and began sending their recyclables to other facilities. When funding began to drop as a result, the museum survived for a while using new funding sources, including a \$2 admission fee. However, it was not enough to keep the museum open past 2011.

It is time we step in to help this valuable museum. The exhibits currently remain untouched, ready and waiting to reopen. Tipping fees are a sustainable funding source that would enable the museum to operate for years to come.

We have the opportunity to restore an exceptional educational resource to the community and share the importance of recycling with the next generation. I urge you to recognize the value and potential of this museum.

Thank you for raising this bill and for the opportunity to testify today.