



Connecticut
Petroleum Council

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Testimony in Support of SB-941---An Act Delaying Implementation of Certain Clean-Up Standards

The Connecticut Petroleum Council supports SB-941, a bill delaying for two years new reporting requirements for certain environmental cleanups.

Delaying the effective date of the law until 2017 will give DEEP more time to adopt regulations pertaining to the reporting of environmental releases---rules that are needed in order to speed up the remediation process and make the program work in a more efficient and streamlined manner. Those regulations are needed before the program outlined in the existing statute can move forward. Since the regulations are not yet ready, delaying the statutory program until they are ready is a prudent course of action. Regulations which are clear, practical and cost-effective are critical in order to make the clean-up program work properly. Both DEEP and the private sector agree that regulations are needed, a position which industry agreed to in 2013.

The vast majority of reported spills are small and quickly cleaned up. In those situations, site owners should quickly be granted a “No Further Action Needed” letter, which would bring “finality” to the cleanup---an important point not just for property owners, but also for banks which do not want to extend financing on purchases of contaminated property if they can’t be assured that remediation risks and solutions are clear and final. The new forthcoming regulations would allow parties cleaning up many spills to exit the clean-up process quickly, clearly and transparently, and with an assurance of “finality” that all parties agree is critical.

To move forward with the current clean-up program without changing the law and before new regulations are written risks unwinding the good work that has been done over the last few years in the clean-up program negotiations, and assures that the remediation process will continue to be mired in uncertainty and impracticality. A speedier cleanup process is good for property owners, DEEP, banks and lenders---and also shows that we are committed to improving the business climate in Connecticut.

Finally, pushing back the effective date of the statute and waiting for the new regulations will push DEEP to issue those regulations more quickly, and allow the agency to act more efficiently and use its resources wisely---an important consideration for an agency with a big workload and no big increase in staff.

We appreciate the Environment Committee taking our views into consideration.