

**Testimony
for the
Environment Committee
of the
Connecticut Legislature
on
House Bill No. 5385**

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Hartford, CT**

Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

The CT Chapter of NWRA (hereafter the chapter) represents an industry that is dedicated to the environmentally protective, sustainable and economically efficient management of recoverable and recyclable materials, discards and wastes.

We have a vision of a society that reduces waste, recycles more and recovers value from discards to the maximum extent practicable and properly disposes the wastes that remain. We approach our job as reality-checkers who must negotiate, adapt to, and address the day-to-day and evolving conditions associated with collecting and handling recyclables, recoverable materials, discards and wastes. We are in a unique position to offer well informed perspectives on the realities of how these materials are managed today, and how they can be better managed tomorrow.

We are grateful for this opportunity to provide these comments to the CT Environment Committee on legislation about changes to various parts of the solid waste statutes, especially the section defining recycling.

H.B. No. 5385 – An Act Concerning CT DEEPs Materials Management Programs

The CT Chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association (hereafter the chapter) is studying this bill carefully. We believe this measure is an attempt to update and align, by the various and numerous changes proposed in it, CT's solid waste statute with certain things that have occurred or will likely occur in the future within our CT waste and recycling services marketplace. The various changes are put in motion by language deletions, additions or changes. As a general rule, the chapter is always cautious about such changes due to the well-known "unintended consequences kinds of problems" that are often associated with such changes. That said, we are basically comfortable with the proposed changes based on our understanding of the statute, our plain reading of the proposed changes in H.B. No. 5385 and the direction of DEEP materials management strategies and initiatives as elucidated by current DEEP officials.

We will use this opportunity to draw attention though to one proposed change that we do have great concerns with in this legislation. This proposed change is in the definitions, in Section 1. Section 22a-207 (7), involving what constitutes recycling in CT. The new language proposes to change the definition of recycling by deleting that recycling currently "means the processing of solid waste to reclaim material therefrom"; and adding new language that redefines it as, "recycling means the separation and recovery of usable material from waste".

Candidly we have great concerns with the new definition of recycling in this legislation as currently drafted. Our concerns focus on the new words “usable material”. We believe “marketable material” is more appropriate and in keeping with the realities of today’s recycling commodities marketplace. We further want the committee to know that this common sense change to “marketable material” is in keeping with findings in recent DEEP and PRI reports. And last, we believe these key words fit well into long held prevailing recycling industry views that source separated and other recovered materials must have markets and must be marketable for re-use to actually complete the recycling loop.

Accordingly, the chapter respectfully requests that the current language defining recycling be changed, as requested above, as H.B. No. 5385 is considered further this session.

Thank-you for your attention to our comments and views. We stand ready to work with the sponsors, committee, DEEP officials and others, and with our customers to create the best recycling and waste management programs for CT as possible.

The CT chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association represents the private taxpaying waste and recycling haulers and companies that work in CT every day to responsibly manage the after useful life discards, materials, recyclables and wastes generated by its citizens, communities and businesses. We believe in strong, sustainable environmentally responsible programs that are run with the efficiency and expertise that comes from a competitive and robust private marketplace that provides and innovates these services routinely.