Testimony from the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters In opposition to House Bill No. 7298

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PERMITTING FOR CERTAIN SOLID WASTE FACILITIES AND THE DESIGNATION OF RECYCLABLE ITEMS

Dear Co-Chairs Cohen and Demicco, and honorable members of the Environment Committee:

The 90-day automatic permit approval legislation that originated in 2017 (HB 5502) was first raised and rejected by the legislature during the regular session. However, last minute maneuverings during the special session resulted in passage of these provisions in another bill. When the dust settled after special session, it became clear what damage had been done and what the impacts of this new law would be. A compromise was then negotiated in good faith and a new bill was passed in 2018 (HB 5454) that restored some common-sense language that fixed the problem.

Now, this last minute attempt to “undo” the law is once again being offered in the Environment Committee. HB 7298 not only ignores the obvious health, safety and environmental problems that could result from automatically approving a long list of commercial permits, it actually expands the number and types of permits and would have direct negative impact on our state’s recycling laws.

While the large majority of permits are issued in fewer than 90 days, sometimes, due to the nature of the activity proposed, DEEP engages in a complex, highly technical review, which is necessary to ensure environmental and human health standards are met. Furthermore, this bill has the potential to divert the Department’s limited resources away from processing permit applications. Would it be better for DEEP to reject automatically if they were coming up against a deadline with a permit that had known problems, or to have more time to work with the applicant to resolve the issues? The negotiated language in last year’s bill provided for a time frame that better accommodated all involved and should remain intact.

CTLCV and advocates had not learned of this renewed effort to bypass the permitting process until yesterday. We have much more information that we will provide to you to help inform your position as you consider HB 7298. We urge your rejection of this legislation. Thank you.

Lori Brown
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CTLCV