

# Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-930

AN ACT CONCERNING FOOD WASTE DIVERSION AND ANAEROBIC

**Title:** DIGESTION FACILITIES.

**Vote Date:** 3/31/2021

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/19/2021

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Rep. Joseph P. Gresko, 121st Dist.

Rep. Christine Palm, 36th Dist.

Rep. Dorinda Borer, 115th Dist.

Rep. Jaime S. Foster, 57th Dist.

Rep. David Arconti, 109th Dist.

Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.

Rep. Anthony L. Nolan, 39th Dist.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

Roughly five hundred thousand tons of food waste enter Connecticut's municipal solid waste stream each year. This equates to approximately 23% the state's municipal waste. Recent advancements in anaerobic digestion technology allow for the conversion of food waste into clean energy on a large scale. At the same time, municipalities are finding it more difficult to manage the solid waste stream. This bill seeks to assist the state's clean energy goals, while at the same time, provide some relief to municipalities' waste burden, by establishing a pilot program allowing for curbside food waste collection.

## **Substitute Language - LCO No. 6218**

Reduces distance from forty miles in Line 27 Raised Bill to twenty miles in Line 27 Substitute Language. Added Section 2(2) lines 58 to 62 to Substitute language. Added Section 4 to Substitute Language.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Katie Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection**

SB930 is consistent with Connecticut's Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy and recommendations of the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM) to improve diversion and recovery of food scraps and organic waste.

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) recommends the minor changes to the bill. Section 1(d) requires DEEP to establish a voluntary pilot for any municipality to establish a diversion program for source separated organic material. Section 1 (d) is not necessary. Municipalities can already contact DEEP to establish a diversion program. Section 2 directs DEEP to engage in outreach and education about aerobic static pile composting. DEEP actively works with municipalities of composting options and has a web page dedicated to components and organics.

DEEP encourages the development of additional composting and anaerobic digestion facilities to aggregate the volume of organics needed to supply new anaerobic digestion facilities.

### **Brian Hurlburt, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture**

Farm-based anaerobic digesters of manure present the opportunity to increase renewable energy, increase the economic activity of Connecticut's agricultural sector, and improve the environment. Anaerobic digestion advances Connecticut's goals to generate cleaner, reliable, and affordable energy.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Saud Anwar, Senator, CT Senate**

Oakridge Dairy, one of the largest dairy farms in Connecticut, has been working hard for the past few years to traverse the approval process for an anaerobic digester to convert manure to methane. Oakridge pursues the anaerobic digester to make their business more economical and environmentally sustainable. Connecticut has one anaerobic digester while Massachusetts has several under the same federal regulations. This is frustrating for Oakridge and other dairy farms that want to invest in this technology.

**Mather Knickerbocker, First Selectman, Town of Bethel**

One-third of municipal solid waste is compromised of food scraps according to surveys. Municipalities. Waste Management plants will close soon, there must be ways to decrease the amount of municipal solid waste in landfills. SB930 provides incentives to increase the number of facilities operational in Connecticut.

**Samuel King Owner & CFO Blue Earth Compost, Inc.**

The two issues with curbside organics collection at the municipal level are 1) cost and 2) contamination. DEEP must find ways to make resources available to municipalities and resources be allocated now to lessen the significant costs in the future to address the state's waste management issues. Connecticut continues to resolve issues with sustainable materials management and more can be done to achieve goals for waste diversion. If goals are not met for reduction of municipal waste stream municipalities will pay the increased costs.

**Brian Paganini, Vice President, Quantum Biopower**

Comments on suggested regulatory framework for anaerobic digesters in Connecticut to prevent overdevelopment of sites, prevent farms from becoming waste facilities and DEEP support to municipalities to start voluntary diversion programs. Quantum Biopower is currently the state's only anaerobic digestion facility, which generates one Megawatt of electricity, located in Southington, CT.

**Donna Hamzy, Advocacy Manager, Connecticut Council of Municipalities**

Connecticut Council of Municipalities is a partner to discuss the options presented by the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM). "Perfection cannot be the enemy of progress". Start small and significant changes to remove organics and establish new markets from the waste stream.

*The Environment Committee received in more than 20 additional testimonials in support of SB930.*

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

None

**Reported by: Steve Smith**

**Date: 4/14/21**