

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5298

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING WASTE-TO-ENERGY FACILITIES.

Vote Date: 3/18/2022

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/7/2022

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Maria P. Horn, 64th Dist.

Rep. Geraldo C. Reues, 75th Dist.

Rep. Mary Mushinsky, 85th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Address the transition of operations of the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Katie Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection.

New infrastructure is need in the long-term to restore self-sufficiency to Connecticut's waste sector. DEEP is eager to collaborate with the General Assembly on alternative efforts to the MIRA WTE facility for the long-term. There is enormous potential to scale up cost-effective programs to reduce and divert MSW tonnage and if the operation of MIRA is feasible or should there be a new capacity built.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Luke Bronin, Mayor, Hartford

With the looming closure of MIRA'S waste- to energy facility it is important to examine the challenges facing MIRA and MIRA member towns. The MIRA facility should not continue as an Incineration Plant. There have been catastrophic system failures in the past and may be in the future with no clear backup plan of the disposal of the solid waste. The plant should no longer exist. The scope of the task force should be expanded to study the state's solid waste management total needs.

Matthew Hart, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments

Municipalities will be greatly impacted by the findings of any task force that addresses the future of waste management in Connecticut. Municipalities and local taxpayers bear the brunt of the cost of disposal of solid waste as well as the potential liabilities associated with landfilling solid waste that is transported out of Connecticut. We therefore encourage municipal representation on any task force or working group to study the future of waste management in Connecticut.

Frazier Blaylock, Covanta Energy

Covanta Energy operates WTE facilities in the state and prioritizes taking responsibility for its own waste generation. WTE facilities handle the majority of the state's waste and helped the eventual closing of all state landfills. WTE is an advanced technological means of waste disposal that generates energy for recycling into electricity and is widely recognized for reducing greenhouse gases.

Ann Gadwah, Outreach Organizer- Sierra Club Connecticut

We support the bill but think the focus should be broadened to include the waste management problem statewide. The MIRA trash incinerator is failing now but Connecticut has four other incinerators that are aging. Included on the task force should be CCSMM, the Hartford Waste Task Force and DEEP along with community representatives and municipal leaders. Energy and Technology has a similar bill SB 277 which should be combined with this bill.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, COST

Connecticut is facing significant challenges in the management of solid waste. More than 90 municipalities have signed into CCSMM to develop recommendations to achieve a more equitable, affordable and sustainable waste system. COST supports CCSMM's recommendations for stewardship programs but we need long-term solutions. We look forward to working with lawmakers on the bill language to ensure that the task force is focused.

Susan Eastwood, Founder, Ashford Clean Energy Task Force

The focus of the task force should be broadened to include statewide waste management. No one wants to ship our waste to out-of-state landfills but incinerating our trash is neither acceptable or viable. Zero Waste policies is a better alternative and by banning single use plastics and other products like polystyrene and plastic food service ware this committee has advanced these goals. The composition of the task force should include independent experts as well as representatives from the waste management industry.

Donna Hamzy Carroccia, Advocacy Manager, CCM

CCM encourages the Environment Committee and the Energy and Technology Committee to work together to craft a bill that ensures municipalities have a seat at the table of any task force or working group that is created. CCM stands ready to find solutions to support our environmental and fiscal health.

Alex Rodriguez, Save the Sound

Addressing the transition of operations of MIRA is a step in the right direction for this task force however we recommend certain changes to the overall makeup of the Task Force as well as improving waste reduction overall.

Donald Stein, Chairman, MIRA

As we and a host of private sector operators address the short-term challenge we see there are clearly two tasks. A thorough examination is long overdue of Connecticut's solid waste policy and to acknowledge that absent public direction, authority and investment solid waste disposal will default to the most readily available and least cost. Connecticut needs to develop the least disruptive and most efficient means to deal with the almost one million tons per year shortfall. RFP's for waste disposal are issued and will be underway well before the Task Forces report deadline. We offer our perspective and insight on pursuing long term strategy.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Thomas Swarr, ad hoc member, MIRA

I cannot support forming this task force. I would support forming a task force with a much broader scope. If Connecticut is serious it will require public incentives, financial and policies to promote clean power and electric vehicles

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 22, 2022