

**Testimony of Susan Eastwood
CGA Environment Committee
March 6, 2020**

In support of SB 11 with changes

Dear Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Susan Eastwood. I am a resident of Ashford and the Chair of the Ashford Clean Energy Task Force, a member of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT and the Sierra Club Executive Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of **S.B. No. 11 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RELIABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE STATE'S WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, with changes.**

Waste management has become a real dilemma for Connecticut's towns. Since our trash is no longer welcome overseas, we have been forced to face our excessive consumption and look for ways to reduce the waste from product packaging, unused food and other, often toxic materials. What to do with our garbage?

Less is more, and the most efficient solution is to promote and support ways of reducing our trash volume. Teaching us to use less and requiring less packaging will be a partial solution.

Recycling has been helpful and a source of revenue for towns in the past, but with the introduction of multi-stream recycling, intended to encourage people to recycle more, the combine stream is often contaminated by dirty paper, broken glass, etc. Now that the market for recycling has crashed, towns are having to spend more and more to get rid of their waste. Returning to a modernized separate stream recycling program would help and adding composting of food waste would also reduce the bulk of trash a great deal. The proposed Bottle Bill upgrade will take up to 400 million bottles out of the waste stream annually, if the bill is amended to include wine and liquor bottles, which are 60% of the glass tossed.

I support zero waste goals and vigorous efforts achieve them; this is possible if the will is there. Zero waste is recognized as achieving 90% or greater diversion from landfills and incinerators. The goal is to get as close to zero as possible, without getting caught up on the impossibility of actually hitting zero. "Zero waste" is like "zero drug tolerance" or "zero accidents in the workplace" standards. Zero is the goal, and the right policies will get you as close as you can get.

The remaining trash must be dealt with. Landfills do leak, but newer barriers are much better than in the past. Incinerators are extremely toxic, emitting gasses that are more dangerous than coal plants. These include nitrous oxide (NO_x) and carbon dioxide (CO₂), and ozone depleting CFC-11. The burning process produces dioxin and benzene in both the emissions and in the ash. They burn all kinds of materials that contain highly toxic metals, such as cadmium and lead, as well as synthetic chemicals, like PFAS, that have many serious health impacts, including cancers, birth defects and more. The temperature is not hot enough to break down the 'forever chemical' PFAS and the ash is trucked across the state, to a special ash landfill in Putnam. The ash landfill in Putnam is located on the Quinebaug River and ash is often blown into neighboring properties and the water. Rather than expanding the dump's capacity, as currently proposed, we should be planning an alternative way to dispose of our trash. All these types of waste facilities tend to be located in low income environmental justice communities raising the issue of equity, as well.

The best option is anaerobic digestion, which reduces the amount of waste and solves the problem of landfills that emit methane and smelly gases.

I support the sections of this bill that support recycling and reduction of waste but object to support for outdated and dangerous incinerators. I urge you to **AMEND SB 11 with emphasis on zero waste and anaerobic digestion!**

Thank you for your work to make Connecticut a safe and healthy place to live and work.

Sincerely,

Susan Eastwood
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