



Ellen Zoppo-Sassu
Mayor

City of Bristol

Office of the Mayor

RESPICE, ADSPICE, PROSPICE

Look to the Past, Look to the Present, Look to the Future

TESTIMONY ON S.B.11

AN ACT CONCERNING THE RELIABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE STATE'S WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

For the last two years, the City's Public Works staff has been grappling with the cost of recycling since China adopted their National Sword policy. They are no longer buying American generated recyclables for re-use in items produced in their country, which has created a volatile market with limited opportunity for the glass, plastics, and cardboard.

Last year, I and several other mayors and first selectmen testified here to ask the Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection to revisit state policies and take a more pragmatic approach to managing recyclables in the absence of robust markets for many materials formerly exported to Southeast Asia. Locally, our taxpayers must now pay for services that we previously received a credit for against our expenses. In Bristol alone, we are paying an additional \$400,000 annually.

In Bristol, we have already taken steps to revise the recycling mantra that has taken over 25 years to cultivate, and are now advocating for repurposing and diversion out of the waste stream to reduce our costs. Some examples of this include using a grant to purchase household composting containers; seminars and workshops for the public and in the schools as part of our upcoming Earth Day activities; as well as establishing a Trash to Treasure site to set aside items that could be repurposed or used in different settings or donated to local non-profits that provide furniture and household goods to individuals and families emerging from homelessness and/or domestic violence situations. Public Works routinely crushes and chips wooden pallets. These are now offered to the public for art projects, as well as will be used in the upcoming Garden projects that the Public Works Dept. is doing at schools. Pallets will be used to construct the raised beds, and other materials like gutters and pieces of pipe will be used to grow herbs. The City is also partnering with Simply Recycling to hand out Orange bags to elementary students to collect unused clothing. Of every ton collected, \$20.00 will go back to the Bristol Schools.

The important point in all of this is that if we, the municipalities, are going to these lengths to address this problem, it is vital that the State be our partner in this endeavor. Since the markets for recovered materials remain soft and are not projected to improve in the near future - placing a heavy burden on to continue curbside services - we recommend DEEP review and revise its efforts to ensure emphasis is placed on collection of materials for which the markets and infrastructure are robust.

And finally, within S.B. 11, the communities that utilize Covanta, which is based here in Bristol, would strongly recommend that Section 2(c) safeguard the Operating Committees from any changes or actions imposed by the Department without having the opportunity to approve that language. As noted in the testimony of our Executive Director, Mark Bobman, we, as a regional agency, are uniquely positioned to solicit services and then procure what it needed for our member communities in a much more streamlined fashion than what is described in this proposed bill.