

Energy and Technology Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1172
AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY GENERATED FROM SOLID WASTE
Title: MANAGEMENT.
Vote Date: 3/14/2023
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/7/2023
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

[Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75th Dist.](#)
[Rep. Holly H. Cheeseman, 37th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR THE BILL:

Connecticut needs to expand its electricity infrastructure to satisfy future energy demands while finding alternative energy sources that will help it reach its stated carbon emissions reduction goals and renewable targets. Further investigation into the development, procurement and employment of such alternative assets is required to assess alternative energy sources' potential impacts and benefits. Solid waste may potentially be utilized as alternative fuel source for electricity generation in Connecticut. Therefore, this bill would amend Conn. Gen. Stat. § 22a-228 such that the Commissioner of DEEP will revise the Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy (CMMS) to incorporate the findings contained in the report issued by PURA in Docket No. 22-10-07. The revised solid materials management plan would include recommendations for the state to support, procure, and retain waste-to-energy facilities.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Commissioner Katie Dykes, CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) – Generally supports the objectives of the bill, noting that Sec. 3 of the Governor's Bill (H.B. 6664) "would provide DEEP with the authority to partner with municipalities or regional waste authorities (with their consent) to issue an RFP for waste infrastructure" (Katie Dykes, DEEP Testimony, March 10, 2023). DEEP recognizes the bill as an opportunity to consider the best options to ensure municipal participation in waste-to-energy facilities, noting that municipal tip fee revenues represent most of the revenues for existing waste-to-energy facilities. DEEP further recognizes the bill as an opportunity to stabilize energy in the interest of ratepayers. The bill may also encourage the development of other alternative energy products, such as biogas or sustainable aviation fuel.

DEEP recommends that the bill implement protections for Connecticut's environmental justice communities since they already host a disproportionate share of waste disposal infrastructure in the state and, as such, are affected by air pollution. DEEP thus advises that the bill language be drafted considering such environmental impacts as NOx emissions. These recommendations are based on Connecticut's effort to reach its stated climate goals and renewable targets, as well as those necessary in order to attain national ozone standards.

NATURE AND SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

Frazier Blaylock, Covanta Energy – Supports this bill because it encourages Connecticut to value its waste and utilize it in-state at waste-to-energy facilities. The bill would address the waste disposal crisis following the closure of the state's landfills and support an in-state energy-generating industry. In addition, the bill would help to support existing waste-to-energy plants in Connecticut by driving revenues up, allowing the facilities to keep up with rising costs.

Julie Cammarata, Principal, Cammarata Government Affairs, LLC – Supports the bill as an effort to reinvest in Connecticut's waste-to-energy infrastructure since it will help the state reach its energy and materials management goals. The short-term support of the state's waste-to-energy facilities presents benefits. Still, the state ought to ensure that it does not overbuild new facilities that it will ultimately rely less upon as it moves toward its emissions and renewable targets. Therefore, the bill language should be modified to examine Class I renewable energy facilities that handle waste *and* waste-to-energy facilities. Such a language modification will ensure that the state balances its development of alternative renewable energy sources with its other energy materials management policies.

Annmarie Drugonis, First Selectwoman, Town of Seymour, CT & Executive Committee of the Bristol Facility Policy Board – Supports the bill to help Connecticut's solid waste disposal infrastructure by utilizing its waste-to-energy facilities. The bill will take steps to require DEEP to revise the state's Comprehensive Materials Management Plan (CMMP) to support the state's waste-to-energy facilities. The Bristol Facility Policy Board recommends that the CMMP specifically reference state bond funds available for needed improvements at waste-to-energy facilities. It also suggests that waste-to-energy is classified as Class I for renewable energy credits.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, CT Council of Small Towns (COST) – Supports the bill because it will help municipalities manage their solid waste disposal after the closing of in-state landfills. This bill would support a more reliable revenue stream for waste-to-energy facilities, supporting their continued operation given rising operating costs as well as incentivizing further development in the state. In addition, waste-to-energy facilities will provide municipalities with a cost-effective alternative to landfills for managing their solid waste.

Donna Hamzy Carroccia, Chief Strategy Officer, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) – Supports the bill because it intends to support the state's waste-to-energy infrastructure, allowing existing to continue operating and making further development viable. Waste-to-energy facilities will help the state address its solid materials and recyclables management issues following the closure of the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) and global changes in the solid materials and recyclables market. They may therefore

contribute to the state's future self-sufficiency concerning energy and solid materials management goals.

Mike O'Friel, Senior VP and General Counsel, WIN Waste Innovations – Supports the bill intentions to support the state's existing waste-to-energy infrastructure so that improvements may be made to aging facilities and so that those facilities may continue to operate with rising costs. The bill also aims to stabilize revenue for waste-to-energy facilities, incentivizing further development and retention. WIN Waste Innovations notes that the construction of new waste-to-energy facilities is currently not viable. Still, the support of existing facilities will help the state continue to manage its in-state waste disposal capacity.

NATURE AND SOURCE OF OPPOSITION:

Janet Bellamy, Ashford, CT – Opposes the bill because the incineration of trash would discourage the proper disposal of recyclable and compostable material. Waste-to-energy is not as efficient as other alternative energy sources, nor does it have the potential to create as many jobs recycling or alternative renewable energy assets. Waste-to-energy emits toxins into the atmosphere, including carcinogens and particulate matter, that cause multiple health complications and environmental contamination. Such emissions' impacts would place additional strain on Connecticut's environmental justice communities.

Ann Gadwah, Advocacy and Outreach Director, Sierra Club CT – Opposes the bill because trash incineration is an expensive and polluting means of waste disposal. As an alternative energy source, it is neither clean nor renewable. Trash incineration also releases toxins into the community and the environment, resulting in health complications, air pollution, and other harmful effects. Furthermore, waste-to-energy facilities currently disproportionately impact Connecticut's environmental justice communities. The Sierra Club notes that out of the five trash incinerators in the state, the two largest incinerators were the Hartford MIRA plant (closed) and the operational waste-to-energy plant in Bridgeport. Encouragement of waste-to-energy facilities may destroy useful or valuable materials, disincentivize more sustainable waste management solutions, and impact the state's progress toward its renewable targets and climate goals.

Ann Schmidt, Group Leader, Citizens Climate Education – Opposes the bill because the commercial scale production of new gas products such as biogas requires trash to be the feedstock. In addition, the state intends to pass legislation to reduce its waste through composting and recycling programs in this session. The support of waste-to-energy infrastructure would therefore conflict with Connecticut's stated goals and the policies and objectives of many of its municipalities. Citizens Climate Education also notes that DEEP has presented information which indicates that waste-to-energy is neither cost-effective nor sustainable.

Reported by: Robert Downes

Date: 3/14/23