



CCM Testimony

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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

March 8, 2024

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 168 towns and cities.

SB 191 An Act Concerning Food Scrap Diversion From The Solid Waste Stream And The Redemption Of Out-Of-State Beverage Containers

CCM appreciates the opportunity to comment on SB 191.

Section 2 of the bill requires that by July 1, 2025, the Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) amend regulations to designate residentially generated food scraps as an item required to be recycled, and that by January 1, 2028, each municipality establish a program requiring residents to separate food scraps from solid waste.

Connecticut has a trash and recycling crisis, and Connecticut's municipalities are bearing the burden. Food waste is heavy and makes up 25% of local waste streams. While towns and cities recognize removing food scraps may reduce municipal solid waste tipping fees and is an important step in responsibly managing municipal solid waste, **we do not support** setting the unfunded mandate of January 1, 2028, to collect food scraps since the infrastructure to carry out this responsibility is not in place for municipalities and the solid waste collection industry.

CCM opposes this unfunded mandate and supports **voluntary** programs for municipalities that seek to source-separate organic materials. CCM recommends continuing the organic PILOT programs, and include an urban center for a future PILOT to review and evaluate them for efficiency, cost effectiveness and benefits. This experience will help drive better informed decisions and more positive results in the future. Coupled with the need to build out the organics system, CCM recommends engaging the Green Bank to leverage its resources to assist in the development of this infrastructure. Until this is done, it is premature to require towns and cities to establish residential food scrap pick-up.

Municipalities cannot and should not do this on their own. The state must be a partner in this endeavor. The cost and logistical difficulties of establishing a food scrap diversion program are staggering. Some questions regarding implementation of a mandated food scrap diversion program include:

- For municipalities that contract with local waste and recycling companies, what does a municipality do if the company will not provide this service, but they have a contract in place that extends beyond January 1, 2028?
- Is there any estimate of what a local waste and recycling company might charge for this service?
- How will municipalities pay for this, other than by raising property taxes?
- Will the municipalities who provide their own municipal trash and recycling service have the infrastructure to do this by 2028?
- Will the state be providing any funding to help support this initiative?

Addressing food scrap diversion from our solid waste stream is a critical part of solving Connecticut's trash problem, but mandating how towns and cities handle this problem within the next four years without giving them a seat at the table or providing them with any financial support is not the solution.

CCM encourages the Committee to consider the burden this unfunded mandate places on towns and cities when evaluating SB 191 and **oppose the bill as drafted**.

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If you have any questions, please contact Lindsay Seti, Advocacy Manager at CCM at lseti@ccm-ct.org or (203) 985-9694.