



**Testimony for the Environment Committee
Monday, February 27, 2023**

**Low Dubuque – Vice President, CT Chapter
National Waste and Recycling Association**

I am here today to express our deep opposition to HB 6664, which would, among other things, implement an Extended Producer Responsibility scheme in the state of Connecticut, give DEEP complete control over Connecticut’s waste infrastructure, increase taxes on Connecticut residents through a solid waste assessment, and mandate statewide separation of organics in Connecticut.

Opposition to EPR Scheme

This is the second time in a week that I am testifying against EPR in Connecticut. DEEP just recently promoted EPR as the solution to the state’s “self-sufficiency crisis” as a part of their new solid waste management plan, and here we are again having to push back against another ill-advised attempt at legislating a solution to a problem that doesn’t exist.

In promoting its EPR scheme, DEEP has stated that it will help eliminate up to 190,000 tons of waste annually by 2028 when the program is fully implemented. Where do those numbers come from?

What we found in DEEP’s records that were produced via a FOIA request that the numbers have no basis in fact. An intern at DEEP looked at the amount of packaging and paper in the disposed MSW in 2015 and multiplied it by 80%. We assume that is because British Columbia, Canada has an 80% recovery rate (not recycling rate), they used 80%. What everyone needs to understand is that British Columbia does not cover all the potentially recoverable products, like glass. Because BC did not have adequate and appropriate MRFs, transfer stations, and universal collection of recyclables, BC created EPR to fill in all these gaps. EPR is not the sole reason for improvement in BC. The state of Connecticut has universal collection, many transfer stations, and several modern MRFs-- so EPR will not move the needle in Connecticut.

Further, DEEP’s records show that DEEP knows EPR will have a detrimental impact on small haulers, and facility operators in Connecticut. DEEP has no idea how many family-owned businesses will close if this bill is passed.

Support Exploring Separate New Minimum Content Standard Legislation

At the end of the day, Connecticut has a simple solution to help increase recycling in the state, and it is currently in the same bill. Instead of establishing EPR, a simpler and more effective solution would be

setting reasonable post-consumer content standards for materials including plastic, glass, and paper packaging and containers. Such standards will create more robust markets for materials recovered through existing recycling programs, thereby supporting their use for manufacturing into new products and packages.

Last year, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed into law a bill establishing postconsumer recycled content requirements for plastic, glass, and paper containers, packaging materials, and trash bags. Considering guidelines that mirror New Jersey's would jumpstart demand for recycled materials throughout the region and could ultimately inspire nationwide recycled content standards, while protecting Connecticut's vital existing recycling programs and infrastructure.

NWRA would support a separate minimum content proposal that was drafted with input from the waste and recycling industry, just like we are pushing for in New York. At that end of the day, all we are asking for is a seat at the table to openly engage with the legislature on the industry that our members have worked in for, in many cases, several generations. DEEP has spent too many years ignoring the waste and recycling experts in this state, who are more than willing to assist where we can.

Opposition to Creation of Solid Waste Regional Authorities overseen by DEEP

Section 3 of this legislation would provide DEEP with extraordinary power and control over any new waste management infrastructure through their proposed RFPs. DEEP is not a developer, they are a regulator, this creates a major conflict of interest, and is nothing more than a power grab implemented by DEEP through potential long term contracts.

Opposition to Organics Mandate

Section 5 of this legislation which would mandate statewide separation of organics. We agree that diverting food scraps and other materials should be considered, we however oppose this mandate. Connecticut has 169 towns with unique conditions and demographics. For example, multi-family homes and apartment complexes cannot easily source separate food scraps. There are also ways, such as mechanical sorting equipment, to divert food scraps. This bill does not allow such a method unfortunately.

Opposition to Solid Waste Assessment

Finally, Section 8 of this legislation proposes a \$5 per ton fee on all waste destined for landfills and additionally raises the \$1.50 per fee on waste received at a waste-to-energy facility to \$3 per ton. At the end of the day, this will act as a pass through to consumers and another tax on Connecticut residents. With inflation being over 6%, and the cost of food and other basic necessities skyrocketing, Connecticut's citizens cannot afford to another tax increase.