

# Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6917

AN ACT CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTE IN THE

**Title:** STATE.

**Vote Date:** 2/28/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference to Appropriations

**PH Date:** 2/19/2025

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Environment Committee

## **Co-Sponsors:**

Rep. Aundre Bumgardner, 41st Dist.  
Rep. Hector Arzeno, 151st Dist.

Rep. Mary M. Mushinsky, 85<sup>th</sup> Dist.  
Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75<sup>th</sup> Dist.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill provides funding to enforce certain food waste diversion requirements, provide increased food waste diversion from certain entities, create source funding for food waste diversion infrastructure projects, and authorize municipal & regional waste coordinators. It aims to address Connecticut's issues with solid waste management and disposal by providing relevant facilities support and encouraging food donations. To this end, the bill is also implementing a study on consumer packaging and producer responsibility.

**Substitute Language LCO 5575** Section 1 was changed to appropriate funds to the Recycle CT Foundation, Inc. Section 2 made technical changes. Section 3 adds waste conversion facilities to the entities required to pay for tons of solid waste processed, it removes the requirement that facilities to pay for every ton of waste processed at applicable facilities, it adds a provision to require applicable transfer stations and volume reduction plants to pay a fee, broadens the facilities that are required to make quarterly returns, removes the requirement that a certain amount of the money collected from this section go to the general fund, and makes various conforming changes. Section 5 moved out the date DEEP is required to report from February 1, 2026, to January 15, 2027, and added additional details to the report's required elements.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

### **Katie Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection**

The Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) supports the bill with concerns. Katie Dykes appreciates Section 2's efforts to reduce organic waste sources and Section 4 allowing solid waste to be used to support local or regional capacity. The Governor's additional funding builds on the grants DEEP has distributed to the regional Councils of Governments. However, the appropriation of funds stated in Section 1 and required funds need for Section 5's study are not addressed in the Governor's budget.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Jeff Caggiano, President, Bristol Facility Policy Board**

Bristol Facility Policy Board expresses support with significant reservations regarding Section 3 of this bill. Jeff Caggiano proposes that Bristol retain funds used for facility modernization and improvement, instead of diverting them. In his written testimony, he explains that Connecticut lacks any sustainable waste handling system, aside from their own. If Section 3 remains unchanged, they are concerned about the impact decreased funds will have on the future quality of their facilities.

### **Susan Eastwood, Chapter Chair, Sierra Club Connecticut**

In her submitted public hearing testimony, Susan Eastwood supports this bill, with slight concerns. She expresses appreciation for the bill enforcing efforts to decrease food waste and strengthening existing laws putting reuse before complete disposal. The bill addresses food insecurity rates within Connecticut by requiring facilities to donate food before disposing it too. However, they disagree with section 6's exemption of specific schools, and express concern over the bill's study about consumer packaging and approach to nips funds, finding both underdeveloped.

### **Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns**

In Connecticut Council of Small Towns' (COST) public hearing testimony, they express overall support with significant concerns regarding certain sections. COST disagrees with Section 3's-imposed fee on processed waste at resource recovery facilities. The additional costs paired with existing budget challenges result in local budget cuts and ballooned delivery prices. They also express concern about the bill's failure to address investment in the state's waste-to-energy facilities. COST supports sections 2 – 5, which provide increased food donation programs reducing food waste and revenue flexibility for municipalities to manage solid waste. They also support the required study about food packaging and proper disposal.

The following Councils all support HB 6917 due to its authorization for municipal and regional waste coordinators. The bill's efforts to support strategies to decrease food waste, increase recycling, and fund sustainable food donation systems all align with their priorities. However, they have concerns about the funding needed to establish and sustain a viable municipal program.

**Samuel Gold, Executive Director, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments**

**Matthew W. Hart, Executive Director, Capitol Region Council of Governments**

**Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western Connecticut Council of Governments**

**48 citizens expressed support. HB 6917**

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Lewis Dubuque, Vice President, National Waste & Recycling Association**

The National Waste & Recycling Association (NWRA), neutral on the organics related aspects of the bill, opposes the bill's inclusion of an Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging study. Instead, they prefer the state study Connecticut's waste characterization and its effect on waste management. Lewis Dubuque, on behalf of NWRA, finds that the proposed changes stated in the bill are not grounded in reliable data and stakeholder input.

**Amanda Kennedy, Executive Director, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments**

While they support the committee's effort in addressing solid waste issues, they oppose the bill's execution. They want a strategy that holds more than large generators accountable for food waste, a focus on statewide education, and a developed funding mechanism dedicated to material management.

**2 citizens expressed opposition HB6917.**

**Reported by: Phoebe Mann**

**Date: March 28, 2025**