

House Republican Press Release

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Harkins Looks to Expand Trash to Energy Initiatives



Proposal Invests in Alternative and Renewable Energy

HARTFORD- State Representative John Harkins (R-Stratford) testified this week before the General Assembly's Energy and Technology Committee in favor of legislation he is co-sponsoring that would expand the state's trash-to-energy capacity, and further diversify Connecticut's energy resources, while simultaneously eliminating a large amount of the solid waste created in the state.

"During this time of volatile fossil fuel prices, doing everything we can to provide alternative and renewable sources of energy is becoming more important," Harkins told the Committee. "Expanding our trash-to-energy capacity can be one of the pieces of 'buckshot' to solve our comprehensive energy policy."

Harkins noted that the State of Connecticut is already the leader in trash-to-energy initiatives nationwide, turning 57% of waste into energy. Roughly 9% of our state's solid waste is sent out-of-state to get land filled, adding up to over 300,000 tons per year (tpy). Conversion of that 300,000 tpy to energy would require an additional 30 megawatts (mW) of capacity. Provisions of the bill would expand the state's trash-to-energy capacity by 60 mW, ensuring the state remains ahead of shortfalls.

The State Department of Environmental Protection recently released their Solid Waste management Plan which calls for aggressive recycling. If the DEP's goals of increasing the amount of waste recycled to between 30-40% by 2015 are met, nearly 500,000 tpy would remain to be sent out of state to landfills. The 60 mW increase in capacity would prevent the need for landfills.

"This bill will allow Connecticut to make tremendous strides toward adding more renewable fuels to our electricity-generating fuel supplies, and ensure our commitment to avoiding the use of landfills for the disposal of solid waste," said Harkins.

Currently, 185 mW of energy is derived from trash-to-energy, equaling 3% of Connecticut's total generation.

The bill remains before the Energy and Technology Committee, and awaits further action.