

House Republican Press Release

February 27, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Stratford Delegation Urges Ban On Disposal Of Toxic Waste Near Residential Property



*Legislation Inspired By Raymark Cleanup Issues Subject Of
Legislative Public Hearing*

Representative John Harkins (R-120), and Representative Larry Miller (R-122) and Senator Dan Debicella (R-21) today urged support for their proposed legislation to protect Connecticut citizens from any future possibility of having toxic waste placed at sites neighboring their homes.

“This is a situation where the federal government needs to be working with us, not against us,” said Rep. Harkins. “The concept of consolidating large quantities of toxic waste in a residential neighborhood is absurd, and the General Assembly needs to create some standards as to what are acceptable guidelines for handling this kind of waste. Today it is the people of Stratford who are dealing with this. Who is to say what community will face it tomorrow? We have an opportunity to tell the federal government what is best for the residents of Connecticut. That begins with taking toxic waste and chemicals out of our residential neighborhoods.”

“We need to eliminate the frightening possibility of waking up one day and finding a toxic waste disposal site next door. Stratford has been living this real possibility as the EPA has been considering consolidating Raymark waste next to residential neighborhoods. We want the General Assembly to pass this legislation to take away the residential consolidation option for Raymark cleanup, and protect all Connecticut residents from the possibility that something like this could someday happen to them,” said Senator Debicella.

The General Assembly’s Environment Committee, of which Senator Debicella and Representative Miller are members, today held a public hearing on *HB 5606, An Act Prohibiting The Disposal Or Storage Of Toxic Waste Near Residential Property*, co-sponsored by Senator Debicella, Representative Harkins and Representative Miller. Specifically, the bill calls for prohibiting the storage or disposal of toxic waste, including asbestos-containing material, at sites that abut or adjoin residential property.

Testifying in favor of the proposed legislation were members of Stratford’s Raymark Advisory Committee (RAC); and two community groups: SaveStratford.org and Stratford Action For The Environment (SAFE).

“While everyone agrees that Raymark waste is hazardous to human health, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) has proposed dumping a large quantity of this material in three residential neighborhoods regardless of the health effects on residents, impact on surrounding property values and Stratford’s tax base . . . We ask that you seriously consider and pass this legislation, not just for the sake of the residents of Stratford, but for the sake of the

dozens of other communities in Connecticut that may be faced with the prospect of a similar proposed “clean-up” by the EPA,” testified Thomas D. Smith, a founding member of SaveStratford.org.

“To jeopardize our families is unconscionable and must be stopped. Dumping thousands of cubic yards at residents’ property line is not acceptable and we need your help to stop it. My property, like most of my neighbors’, is only a quarter acre. There is no room for us to buffer ourselves against dumping asbestos at our property line. I have twin 12-year old boys who play outside all year round. How can they be safe if this is allowed to happen,” testified Paul M. Rohaly, a member of RAC and SAFE. His property abuts the old Raymark Memorial Ballfield that is now part of a Superfund site.

Raymark Industries operated for 70 years on East Main Street in Stratford, making brakes, clutches, and other manufacturing parts. They used a system of lagoons around the area to dispose of waste—much of which seeped into the soil and contaminated it with lead, asbestos, and other various chemicals.

The EPA proposed in late 2007 digging up contaminated soil from over 20 sites polluted by Raymark Industries and consolidating them in 1-3 sites in South Stratford. The effort would involve thousands of dump trucks worth of soil being carried around Stratford, before they would be consolidated and capped with non-contaminated soil. Last month, the EPA recently announced that they would reconsider their initial idea to consolidate Raymark waste within Stratford. The alternative promoted community by groups like the Raymark Advisory Committee and SaveStratford is to remove the toxic material from town or to cap it in place with non-contaminated soil.