

House Republican Press Release

May 5, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Raymark Waste Residential Consolidation Banned



General Assembly Passes Landmark Legislation for Stratford

Representative John Harkins (R-120) and Senator Dan Debicella (R-21) lauded the passage of their bill to ban consolidation of toxic waste placed at sites neighboring their homes. The bill will prohibit the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from consolidating Raymark waste next to residential neighborhoods in Stratford.

Representative Harkins praised their bill as “a common-sense law that will improve quality of life in Stratford. Our families will not be subject to tons of toxic dirt being placed next to our houses. We have better alternatives for the Raymark waste—including removing it from town and capping it in place—that need to be further explored.”

Senator Debicella hailed the passage of the bill as a win for families in Stratford. “We now have a state law on the books to protect Stratford residents from the residential consolidation option for Raymark cleanup and to make sure that nothing similar can ever happen in any other Connecticut community.”

Specifically, the legislation prohibits individuals and government agencies from permanently placing, depositing, disposing of, or storing more than 1,000 cubic yards of soil consisting of asbestos-containing material from one site to another site that abuts or adjoins residential property, and at a height of more than four feet above the existing grade of land without the approval of two-thirds of the legislative body of the municipality. This legislation, now on its way to Governor M. Jodi Rell’s desk, is to take effect on October 1st.

The bill, entitled “An Act Concerning Environmental Justice Communities and Storage of Asbestos Containing Material” (HB 5145) was amended in the House of Representatives to include the Raymark language. The bill passed the House by 139-9 and the Senate by 36-0.

The legislation was introduced in response to an EPA proposal last August to dig up contaminated soil from over 20 sites polluted by Raymark Industries and consolidating them in 1-3 residential neighborhoods 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.

Raymark waste was created by the Raymark Industries, which 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 various chemicals. In the 1990’s, the EPA capped and remediated the main

site, and many of the most polluted residential properties. However, there are still about 20 locations around Stratford that contain unremediated contaminated soil.

Harkins and Debicella also thanked State Representative Dick Roy (D-Milford), who as co-chairman of the General Assembly's Environment Committee was instrumental in getting their legislation past. "Representative Roy's bipartisan support for our bill was one the key reasons we were able to secure near-unanimous support," said Senator Debicella. Debicella also thanked Stratford Representatives Terry Backer and Larry Miller, who both supported the amendment.

Both legislators said they would continue to work with the EPA and local groups such as SaveStratford and the Raymark Advisory Committee to come up with an alternative to remediate the 20 Raymark sites under discussion. "We believe there are viable alternatives to residential consolidation," said Representative Harkins. "and we will continue to work for a clean-up solution that is acceptable to Stratford families."