

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 24, 2014

**TO:** CT DEEP Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Lyle Wray, CRCOG

**SUBJECT:** **Regional Approach to Solid Waste Management Background**

The state's Solid Waste Master Plan has it right - waste-to-energy facilities should only be used as the last option for disposal, after aggressive diversion. While certainly vastly preferable to landfilling, waste-to-energy should be considered as the weakest link both technologically and economically when looking at Connecticut's waste management approaches.

- CRCOG has been involved in the issue of solid waste management since 2008 when staff conducted a study of solid waste options for towns when the long-term contracts with CRRRA expired in November 2012.
- After the completion of the study, CRCOG members determined that the best path forward would be to establish a separate, autonomous solid waste authority that could solicit for services and manage contracts. Thus the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority was formed.
- CCSWA is staffed by CRCOG, but it is a completely separate organization with its own by-laws and decision making structure. They have been instrumental in advocating for changes with CRRRA and in the development of private market alternatives in the state.
- CCSWA is somewhat different from other regional organizations as they do not own or operate any facilities, but they are focused on policy changes that benefit all municipalities in the state. This means working collaboratively with DEEP, CRRRA and other solid waste providers to provide solutions for the towns' benefit.

Changes have been proposed by CCSWA and supported by CRCOG that would more effectively use waste-to-energy in the context of the entire waste management system:

- Over a 7-10 year period, increase diversion (i.e., recycling, reuse, product stewardship) to reduce the amount of waste sent to waste-to-energy facilities by 710,000 tons per year. This will mean reassigning the role of waste-to-energy in Connecticut and creating an infrastructure for diversion and a regulatory environment that encourages diversion.
- Over the same 7-10 year period, use the Hartford waste-to-energy plant as the catalyst for a new model of waste disposal for the State of Connecticut which increases diversion and product stewardship while reducing the state's dependency on waste-to-energy.

- Provide incentives to current waste-to-energy facilities to assist with this transition, including dual commodity contracting (electricity and waste) and the establishment of waste-to-energy's position in the Renewable Energy Credits program.

The CCSWA believes this approach will realign current waste disposal approaches and create a sustainable disposal model moving into the future. While some subsidies for municipalities to continue to use waste-to-energy may be necessary, they should be limited to the 7-10 year transition period and be part of an overall master plan to move away from our overdependence on waste-to-energy.

The above set of goals follows from conclusions that have emerged in the work of the Task Force:

- Connecticut's primary method of disposing of solid waste is through waste-to-energy.
- The solid waste infrastructure does not currently exist in the state to move a large volume of waste away from waste-to-energy to other waste management approaches that reuse and/or recycle materials.
- Waste-to-energy will be challenged as an economical way to dispose of waste due to energy pricing and the pressure it will place on tip fees.
- Of the entire waste-to-energy system in Connecticut, CRRA has the most inefficient plant due to the age of the technology and the extremely high cost to upgrade it. The current plant can operate with moderate investment for up to the next ten years.