

## Waterbury Comments for CCSMM

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To: DEEP RecyclingProgram

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DEEP CCSMM Survey Answers October 15 2020.docx

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Please find attached Waterbury's comments per the request sent out recently by Chris Nelson.

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## **Questions for Response**

**1. Are there any model programs, best practices, or innovative concepts that the Coalition should consider, that could provide a scalable solution in any of the Focus Areas, listed above? The Coalition is interested in hearing about approaches that are conceptual, implemented on a pilot basis, or implemented at scale, whether here in Connecticut or in other jurisdictions in the United States or other countries.**

- Connecticut's own Ray Cycle promotion campaign in the 1990s provided a state-wide presence that aided in public education. Adding such "flavor" to RecycleCT might help with public outreach. Other institutions have used mascots, spokespersons etc with great success.
- Increased recycling enforcement operations by DEEP for businesses and other institutions would contribute greatly to public understanding of recycling requirements. This would be the case even if those operations were performed at low staff levels and without extreme frequency. There is often insufficient political will on the municipal level to provide this necessary level of enforcement.
- "Green Star Tags" in Waterbury are used to tag carts which are being used properly. This tagging, coupled with posting of photos of tagged bins on social media, add a needed positivity to recycling, and our society in general, given negativity is too often the norm. Such tags might only be ceremonial but they could be accompanied by prizes or tickets to raffle prizes. Corporate sponsors might be all too happy to support this effort.
- Evolve the bottle bill so that it 1) offers a valuable handling fee to redemption businesses, 2) increases the redemption value from 5 cents to 10 cents and 3) expands the list to include wine, liquor and other containers, especially glass. Such steps yield twice the recovery rates of CT in other states.
- Phase in curbside organics recycling over 10 years by initiating pilots in 10 communities of different composition.
- Expanded use of media should be included in expanded outreach and enforcement operations. RecycleCT and DEEP do have valuable presence in social media but it needs to become a core operation. Media to include in campaigns should be current popular social media platforms as well as traditional forms such as radio, television and print.

**2. For any solution identified in Question 1, what are the barriers that need to be addressed in order to advance any of these solutions at scale in Connecticut?**

Political will on legislation for the evolution of the bottle bill is needed as it is for exploration of organics towards broad implementation. DEEP would also need to devote itself more fully to enforcement and education than it has. Staff and funding limits are likely barriers for DEEP and municipalities

**a. Are there different implementation considerations for full or partial "subscription" towns versus towns that provide for curbside collection of trash & recyclables?**

Yes.

**b. Is it necessary or beneficial for the solution to be implemented on a statewide, multi-town, or other regional basis, or can it be implemented successfully town-by-town?**

Broader implementation is likely to yield less chaos and more economies of scale. Codifying CT's recycling yes/no list, as per RecycleCT, has already been a huge win. Continuing this effort with broader outreach, enforcement and new systems (e.g. organics and PAYT trials en route to broad implementation) will keep our residents and municipal governments on the same page.

**3. For any solution identified in Question 1, please describe the types of implications or benefits that the solution provides with respect to:**

**a. Sustainability- environmental benefits,**

**b. Reducing costs**

The suggestions in 1. would reduce waste-to-energy activity, thereby cutting the production of greenhouse gases, and reducing trash disposal costs for municipalities.

**4. Would you be interested or willing to present to the Coalition or a Coalition working group on solutions you've highlighted, or is there another speaker or organization that would be helpful for the Coalition to hear from on this topic?**

Waterbury could present but is not expert in the fields put forth. We do have some boots-on-the-ground experience with enhancing curbside recycling programs with best technologies and innovative outreach methods, however.

**5. DEEP can play an important role in advancing sustainable materials management solutions, including: issuing RFPs for long-term energy contracts to support anaerobic digestion facilities; providing grants for collection trucks powered by compressed natural gas (CNG) or electricity through the Volkswagen settlement; employing different approaches to permitting innovative technologies; and streamlining permitting processes. Are there things that DEEP should do differently in its approach to any of the above roles/functions, that would better support sustainable materials management in Connecticut?**

- DEEP could work with a municipality and/or private hauler to showcase alternatives to diesel fuel in powering collection trucks. A positive pilot would open the door to broader adoption. This would address current and likely environmental justice concerns that may be associated with collection and processing operations.
- DEEP needs to provide enforcement officers with "teeth" beyond the minimal NOV powers currently employed. Good enforcement IS good education. Enforcing parallel recycling, compliance with recycling law etc. can make a huge difference in public attitude and participation.
- DEEP should explore re-opening the Trash and Garbage Museums. These two locations gave CT residents a vital civics education in how trash and recycling is handled, and the impacts of waste, recycling and composting on environment and economy. Thousands of residents poured through the doors of these stellar locations for decades. This very important baseline is hard to re-create. Partnerships with non-profits and other existing educational organizations, such as the Connecticut Science Museum, could leverage funding and expertise. The museums could also be host to professional development programs, maker spaces, environmental incubator operations. And...removing their mothballs, Connecticut would be "re-using" a great value we already have.

**6. Are there any solutions that you would like the Coalition to know about that do not fit within the Focus Areas above?**

- Community-based social marketing (CBSM) is a behavior-change discipline that involves positive social pressure and psychological techniques. It has been successfully used to change behaviors of non-recyclers, non-composters etc. [www.cbsm.com](http://www.cbsm.com)
- Partnerships with national leaders in innovation in sustainable materials management could help Connecticut achieve its goals. Closed Loop Partners, for example, works closely with national business leaders on SMM, creating better systems to increase recycling efficiencies. Closed Loop provided invaluable assistance to Waterbury as it enhanced its curbside program. Its national programs might find root in Connecticut, creating a valuable collaboration.

**7. Are there any aspects of the Focus Areas, listed above, that the Coalition should *not* consider (and if so, why)?**

- All options should be considered.