

Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106
DEEP.MMCAPPlanning@ct.gov

RE: Response to Waste Infrastructure Request for Information

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to comment on DEEP's Request for Information on new solid waste infrastructure for our state, in response to the "waste crisis" caused by the closing of the MIRA trash incinerator last year. Since then, the amount of waste Connecticut has been exporting to landfills in other states has doubled, reaching 860,000 tons. This is regrettable, but necessary on a temporary basis, as we work to solve the problem of the growing waste stream.

DEEP seems focused on managing the current amounts of waste through more incineration infrastructure, by any name, but this is shortsighted. There are sustainable solutions that include solid waste reduction and [zero waste](#) policies that may be implemented at the local and state levels. These true waste management tools include the collection and diversion of food scraps, extended producer responsibility, unit-based pricing, source reduction, and eliminating single-use plastics and expanded polystyrene products. Despite our culture of overconsumption, it will be possible to reduce our waste stream by 60-90% by using these methods.

On July 14, 2020, DEEP Commissioner Katie Dykes called MIRA's 2021 annual operation plan "a false choice, and a bad deal for taxpayers across the state, Hartford residents, and the environment." This "bad deal" applies to the four remaining incinerators, and to any new ones the state is looking to build. This dirty deal includes the hidden cost of the adversely affected health and well-being of low-income and communities of color who live, work, go to school and play in close proximity to polluting incinerators. When incinerators burn they produce hazardous air pollutants, including particulate matter, carbon monoxide and other toxic gases, and cancer-causing dioxins.

I urge DEEP to immediately implement programs to "reduce, reuse and recycle" more effectively. This will result in true and lasting change that will benefit the health of our residents and improve our air and water quality. I commend their efforts to strengthen food waste collection, a full third of the waste stream right there. And I remind them of the excellent [Menu of Options](#) produced by CCSMM, especially on unit-based pricing. I am surprised that DEEP has not initiated a campaign for statewide UBP, as requested by many municipalities. If they are serious about a quick reduction in the waste stream, this has been shown to yield immediate and dramatic reductions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Eastwood
Chapter Chair

Sierra Club Connecticut
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Ashford, CT