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Groundwater under Potential Franklin Ash Landfill Not Adequate for Public Drinking-Water Source

HARTFORD, Conn. – Comprehensive tests of the groundwater under the potential ash landfill site being investigated by the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) in Franklin have shown that the site cannot yield the volume of water necessary to enable it to serve as a source of public drinking water.

“The results of the pump tests indicate that locating an ash landfill on the site behind the former Franklin Farms would not compromise a potential public water supply,” said Thomas D. Kirk, CRRA president.

“Confirming the character and capability of the groundwater under the potential site was an important step in determining the suitability for the site,” Kirk added. “Nevertheless, I must emphasize that we are continuing to investigate other alternatives to the Franklin site and we will examine all of them to the fullest extent possible before we apply for permits from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to locate the ash landfill in Franklin.”

Kirk explained that the groundwater tests in Franklin have been underway for a number of months and that the data is now compiled, certified and available for examination.

“The pump test provides a critical component of the extensive body of data that must be examined to certify the site is suitable for an ash landfill. There was keen interest in the test by Franklin’s municipal leaders and public,” he said. “We still must complete more on-site engineering and examination, so we still are not ready to submit a permit application.

“Additionally, we heard the Franklin voters in the non-binding referendum and the Franklin municipal leaders who oppose the ash landfill. We also heard the state legislators who approved a bill to block the ash landfill and Governor Rell, who urged us to explore other alternatives when she vetoed that bill.”

If CRRA determines it can either locate the ash landfill elsewhere in Connecticut, or establish a cost-effective long-term agreement with a privately owned ash landfill, then CRRA will pursue that alternative. “However,” Kirk noted, “if the other alternatives are not found to be cost-effective for the people of Connecticut or there isn’t another suitable location that meets DEP requirements for an ash landfill, then CRRA will apply for permits to build and operate the ash landfill in Franklin.”

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CRRA is investigating alternatives by:

- Seeking long-term bids from privately owned ash landfills for taking Connecticut's ash, the inert residue from the state's environmentally responsible trash-to-energy process;
- Re-examining the results of CRRA's technical survey of potential Connecticut sites for an ash landfill to confirm that the Franklin site is indeed the optimum location in the state;
- Asking the chief executives of the other 168 Connecticut municipalities whether any of them are interested in hosting a CRRA ash landfill, noting that state law requires CRRA to pay the host community \$5 per ton of ash deposited there. This is currently estimated to be \$1.5 million annually; and
- Re-examining the potential for re-use and recycling of ash residue to eliminate or minimize the need for an ash landfill.

"We have already received a few responses from municipal chief executives requesting additional information or suggesting specific sites for consideration in their towns, though we cannot proceed with potential sites they offer unless the sites conform to the rigorous technical requirements established by the DEP for an ash landfill," Kirk said. "This includes having the correct geology and hydrogeology and proximity to a Class B river or stream."

The groundwater tests on the potential Franklin site confirmed two criteria:

- The groundwater under the site flows away from the site and toward the Shetucket River. DEP's siting criteria require that site groundwater flow toward a Class B river.
- The groundwater doesn't have adequate volume to be used as a public drinking-water source. If any appreciable amount of groundwater were pumped for drinking water, it would reduce, interrupt or discontinue the flow of water in Cold Brook, contrary to DEP's protective requirements.

"The results of the groundwater tests are significant and an important step, but it's certainly not the end of the story," said Kirk. "We are continuing to investigate the site as well as other means of meeting Connecticut's disposal challenges. If we find a suitable and preferable alternative, we will take that route."

For more information about the ash landfill siting initiative, visit <http://www.ctsafeashlandfill.com>.

The Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority is a quasi-public agency whose mission is to work for – and in – the best interests of the municipalities of the state of Connecticut. CRRA's new board of directors and new management team develop and implement environmentally sound solutions and best practices for solid waste disposal and recycling management on behalf of municipalities. CRRA serves 110 Connecticut cities and towns. CRRA also runs environmental and recycling educational programs through the [Trash Museum](#) in Hartford and [Garbage Museum](#) in Stratford. For more information about CRRA and its activities, visit <http://www.crra.org>. Computer users can also discuss CRRA at its blog, <http://crra-blog.blogspot.com>.