



CONNECTICUT RESOURCES RECOVERY AUTHORITY

BACKGROUND

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Trash-To-Energy Makes Sense for Connecticut

Connecticut has six trash-to-energy plants.

Each year, they process more than two million tons of municipal solid waste – that’s 82 percent of the state’s post-recycled trash.

They turn that trash into 194 megawatts of clean, renewable power – enough electricity to power almost 300,000 homes.

Electricity generated at trash-to-energy plants is a Class II renewable power source in Connecticut. The state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard mandates that 6 percent of all electricity sold in Connecticut be generated by renewable sources. We may run out of fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal, but humans never stop producing trash.

Trash-to-energy plants are equipped with emissions controls that are superior to other waste combustion and coal-fired power plants. An analysis using U.S. Environmental Protection Agency models determined that trash-to-energy also avoids 36 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions each year.

The U.S. EPA praised the outstanding performance of the nation’s trash-to-energy facilities by stating that “these plants produce 2,800 megawatts of electricity with less environmental impact than almost any other source of electricity.”

In fact, trash-to-energy offers an additional environmental benefit – preservation of precious landfill space. Trash-to-energy reduces by about 90 percent the volume of waste that must go into a landfill, and the residue is tested and meets strict EPA standards for landfilling.

The Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority oversees operation of trash-to-energy plants in Hartford, Bridgeport, Wallingford and Preston. About two of every three Connecticut municipalities send their trash to a CRRA plant.

In FY 2006 CRRA’s four trash-to-energy plants generated 1.1 billion kilowatt hours of Class II green power. That’s enough to supply 119,000 homes.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection reports that the state has very few out-of-state disposal options and stiff competition from neighboring states that also need places to dispose of their trash. Connecticut’s trash-to-energy plants operate at full capacity, and the state sends more than 300,000 tons of waste to out-of-state landfills each year. Protecting existing disposal capacity and planning for more disposal capacity will become an increasingly important issue for local and state officials.

Trash-to-energy makes sense for Connecticut.

Source: Integrated Waste Services Association, Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority