

Town of Burke

Kenneth "Sam" Sanderson
Selectman, Town of Burke

April 16, 2014

This is a letter I wrote to Senator Hartwell when we first got wind of some of the provisions of Act 148

My name is Sam Sanderson and I have been a selectman in the Town of Burke for over 25 years.

I'm writing to let you know of my concern over the fact that in this bill your committee requires a town to join a waste district in order to qualify for any funds to help the transition to the new recycling program.

The first thing that I probably should do is to let you know about some of the things Burke does right now as far as managing our trash and recycling.

The Town of Burke has its own solid waste plan so has no need to be in a district.

We have weekly curbside pickup of household trash with a town owned garbage packer truck.

We have a pay per bag system to encourage recycling.

We use this packer truck to pick up roadside trash on our town green-up day.

When a resident sells a house we give them one free pickup with the packer truck for all the items that are sometimes left over after a sale. The same reasoning applies to a new buyer that is left with a bunch of trash from a seller or a landlord that is stuck with a pile of junk from a vanished tenant.

We have a walk-in recycling center that is open 3 part days a week to collect recyclable materials. We have three balers in the building to bale this material. We sell our baled recycled products to the highest bidder which we then load and ship.

We have a free section in this building that is open to everyone to leave items that can be re-used or to take something they can use.

We are a registered E-Waste collector for all electronics.

We collect all types of batteries and recycle them.

We collect redeemable bottles for a different charity each month at the recycling center.

We collect and store egg cartons, bubble wrap and other items for re-use by farmers or merchants.

We collect used eye glasses for charity.

We collect coupons, box tops and soup labels for the school to use to purchase books and supplies.

We collect used oil and vegetable oil year around. We burn these oils in our two used oil furnaces, one in the recycling center and one in the town garage.

We have two hazardous waste days per year for Burke residents.

We collect tires and properly dispose of them.

We have 6 Bulky Days per year free to Burke residents. This where we use the town packer truck to take furniture and other bulky items that are too big for the weekly curbside pickup.

We have a 30 yd. dumpster accessible all year for Burke residents for any scrap metal. We collected and sold 16.4 ton of scrap metal in 2013.

We have a town owned trailer that we leave at the school for recycling. When it is full we bring it to our recycling center, unload, sort and bale the material.

Last year we bought recycling containers for each room in the school.

We have classes in the graded school to encourage recycling and environmental protection.

We have containers for compostable material at the school and the at Community Building by the recycling center building.

Last year we took in 109.89 tons of material at the recycling center. This does not count over 49 tons of compostable material that was collected by the local composting business. This also does not count the over 9000 lbs. of e-waste that was shipped to a recycling contractor. Nor does this count all the newspaper, cardboard, books, metal, packing peanuts etc. that go to residents who are moving, gardening, farming or have some project.

We expanded our 36 ft. by 72 ft. recycling building once since we built it and have the money saved up to expand again but that project is on hold until we see how we will implement the new curbside recycling requirements.

These are some of the things that we have done on our own in the Town of Burke to properly manage our waste stream.

I'm not bothering to ask you to change the wording in Act 148 to allow us to qualify for grants. That's up to you folks to do what you think is best. We will keep on doing what we need to do in the Town of Burke to properly manage our affairs. I just wanted you to know that some of us think we are doing a pretty good job on our own. I don't think that one size fits all and I don't feel we should be penalized because we don't happen to be a member of a waste district.

Thank you for your time,
Kenneth "Sam" Sanderson
Selectman, Town of Burke