



111 South Street, Suite 203, Bennington, VT 05201 (802) 442-0713 (802) 442-0439 fax

January 8, 2018

The Honorable David L. Deen, Chair
House Committee of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife
115 State St.
Montpelier, VT 05633

Sent via email to: Christy Ketchel (cketchel@leg.state.vt.us)

Subject: Letter from the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance in support of H.560 -
Conservation and development; hazardous waste; household and hazardous substances

Representative Deen and Committee Members:

I am writing to offer the support of the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance for the draft legislation, H. 560. I am with the Bennington County Regional Commission and am responsible for assisting the thirteen towns of the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance in implementing their solid waste implementation plan. The Alliance includes the towns of Arlington, Bennington, Dorset, Glastenbury, Manchester, Pownal, Rupert, Sandgate, Searsburg, Shaftsbury, Stamford, Sunderland and Woodford, with a total population of 35,000 people, over 2000 businesses and 25 schools.

The Alliance holds two household hazardous waste events each year for residents and small businesses. Last year we had over 400 households bring a wide variety of materials to our events. The costs of these events, including costs of disposal as well as staff time to organize, manage and advertise each event, generally range from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year. The Alliance does receive some grant support from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of Agriculture and Markets, but most of these costs are borne by the thirteen towns.

Household hazardous waste materials are highly toxic. When we advertise events, we tell people to bring anything that is marked as corrosive, toxic, flammable, use in a ventilated area, and other warnings typically found on the labels of these kinds of materials. Clearly these are dangerous and should not be disposed in the trash or sent to landfills or disposed of in any manner that would allow them to enter our water supplies. In homes in Bennington County, these materials can be found under the sink or in closets or the garage. Adults, children and pets can be easily exposed when they are used, if they leak or by accident. This is why we strongly encourage our residents to dispose of any unneeded materials at our annual events. Collection and disposal requires hiring skilled companies with trained staff that have the capability of transporting and disposing of these materials, and the costs of these services are high.

H.560 proposes a funding mechanism by which manufacturers of household hazardous waste would pay for disposal costs. Such a fund would assist the Alliance in providing services to residents and small businesses and might allow us to create and manage a permanent household hazardous waste facility to serve our area. That would greatly increase our capacity as well as provide more convenience for residents and small businesses.

The Alliance members realize there are complex issues that still need to be addressed, but this legislation would provide an important source of funding and support to our towns as they do their best to serve their residents and small businesses and fulfill the requirements of their solid waste implementation plan. The members of the Alliance hope the committee will work through these issues and recommend passage of H.560. It will be critical to make sure that funding is used for collection and disposal as well as outreach and education by solid waste districts, alliances such as ours, and individual towns as they implement their solid waste implementation plan requirements. A structure similar to the way the highly successful paint and battery collection programs operate would avoid placing an undue burden on the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Thank you for your work on this bill and your consideration of the needs of the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael S. Batcher", written in a cursive style.

Michael S. Batcher
Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance