

SOLID WASTE ALLIANCE COMMUNITIES

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The Honorable David L. Deen, Chair
House Committee of Natural Resources
Fish and Wildlife

Sent via email to: Christy Ketchel, cketchel@leg.

Subject: In support of H. 560 - Conservation and development; hazardous waste; household and hazardous substances

Representative Deen and Committee Members:

My name is Pamela Clapp. I am the Administrator for the Solid Waste Alliance Communities (SWAC). I have worked for SWAC for over 20 years, including managing their hazardous waste collection program. This program collects hazardous waste from businesses and residents in the 10 SWAC member towns serving a population of approximately 14,000 people in Rutland County.

SWAC is a founding member of the Vermont Product Stewardship Council (VTPSC), formed in 2008. VTPSC is comprised of towns, groups, solid waste districts, and alliances in Vermont. VTPSC's mission is to shift Vermont's product waste management system from one focused on government funded and ratepayer financed waste diversion to one that relies on producer responsibility. The intent is to reduce public costs and drive improvements in product design that promote environmental sustainability.

SWAC currently operates under an approved Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) adopted in 2015 and updated every five years. The SWIP requires household hazardous waste collection services for businesses and residents annually. In 2018, a minimum of three events or access to a year-round hazardous waste facility is required. All towns in SWAC must have access to a permanent facility or at least one event within a 15 mile radius. In 2019, the number of required events increases to four. Each event must be at least four hours in duration. In addition, year-round collection options must be available for batteries, fluorescent lamps, mercury thermostats, 1 and 20 pound propane tanks, electronics, paint, and used oil.

Managing hazardous and solid waste in an environmentally friendly, cost effective manner has been a top priority for SWAC for over 20 years. Hazardous waste poses a threat to the environment, residents, businesses, sanitation workers, transfer station attendants as well as animals. SWAC spends approximately \$13,000 annually for household hazardous waste collection services. This figure does not include monies spent for personnel time or outreach and education to residents and businesses. SWAC spends another approximately \$13,000 annually on these activities. Over one third of SWAC's total yearly budget is spent on hazardous waste activities. Outreach and education topics include how and where residents can conveniently, properly, and safely dispose of their products, reduction strategies, and alternative less toxic options. Environmental Producer Responsibility legislation has been extremely beneficial in managing batteries, fluorescent lamps, mercury thermostats, electronics, and architectural paint.

Statewide figures show \$1,580,000.00 were spent by Towns, Groups, Solid Waste Districts, and Alliances in 2016 for hazardous waste collection. We are only serving a very small percentage of Vermonters: approximately 3.8% of the population took advantage of disposing of their hazardous waste at either a permanent facility or a one-day collection event. Whether a town is independent, in a group, a district, or an alliance, hazardous waste collection requires a significant amount of money to implement. The financial burden falls on the resident in the form of an increase in surcharge, a raise in per capita fees, raising property taxes, or a combination.

Legislation such as H.560 would assist in relieving some of the financial burden placed on the Solid Waste Management Entities (SWMEs) in Vermont. SWAC supports the manufacturer registration and product fees outlined in the bill; however, in its current form, a heavy burden is placed on the Agency of Natural Resources to oversee and implement the program. A preferred structure would be similar to the paint environmental producer responsibility legislation already passed by the Vermont Legislature.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill and your past efforts on being a leader in environmental producer responsibility legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Lavoie Clapp

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