

January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## Testimony on H.560

### **A bill relating to conservation and development; hazardous waste; household hazardous substances**

House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, as well as H.560 Co-sponsors Chairman Deen and Vice Chairwoman Sullivan,

My name is Johanna de Graffenreid and I am here today as the Environmental Advocate representing the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, or VPIRG. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.560. VPIRG is in full support of both the intention of H.560 to fund the Waste Management Assistance Fund, and require registration of household products containing hazardous substances with the Secretary of Natural Resources.

For our state to effectively reduce Household Hazardous Waste in our landfills, we must better fund this crucial program. Ensuring manufacturers are responsible through a small fee both removes the burden from small towns and underfunded solid waste management districts, and does not place an undue burden on the companies responsible for producing products that become Household Hazardous Waste. To match the Vermont Pesticide Registration Program, VPIRG proposes that the annual product registration fee in H.560 be increased from \$100 to \$175 per product.

VPIRG was pleased to be invited to participate as a stakeholder during the Department of Conservation Stakeholder meetings on the Vermont Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Management program during the summer of 2017. Each Solid Waste Management Entity must hold four HHW collection events per year, and five separate Solid Waste Management Entities have established permanent collection facilities. Throughout those meetings we heard feedback from solid waste management districts across the state that additional funding is needed to effectively continue to run the program; specifically, Solid Waste Management Districts cumulatively spend approximately \$1.6 million per year to implement the HHW Management program. Ultimately, funding for increased public education, single day collection events and additional drop off facilities are needed to successfully divert HHW from our landfills and protect public health and the environment.

While reports of long lines on single day collection events show deep public support of the program, increased public education and availability of disposal events & sites are needed to reduce the estimated 640 tons of HHW that are inappropriately disposed of in landfills each year. HHW disposed of improperly in landfills as municipal solid waste can pose a significant threat to surface & groundwater resources and community health.

Manufacturers of household products that contain hazardous substances have a responsibility to assist our communities and solid waste management entities in disposing of HHW effectively. H.560 addresses the needs for increased funding for the HHW Management Program, while also ensuring that manufacturers register what hazardous substances are in their products for increased public oversight. This bill is well modeled after the Vermont Pesticide Registration Program, and an increased registration fee from \$100 per product annually to \$175 would both better assist in funding our Household

Hazardous Waste Management program and create uniformity between toxics registration programs in Vermont.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on behalf of VPIRG in support of H.560 and encouraging manufacturers of household products with hazardous substances to fund essential waste disposal programs in Vermont. In passing H.560 you are protecting our water and communities from toxic chemical exposure from improperly disposed of products in our landfills, and by supporting a registration of household products with hazardous substances you are supporting the public's right to know what toxic substances are in their homes. We hope you will consider increasing the registration fee by \$75 in this bill, and encourage you to vote in favor of H.560.