



First, recognize in the first sentence that the committee must confront real “challenges.” The challenges identified are “providing incentives [etc.],” “increasing productivity,” and “encouraging adoption.” These are not abstract “issues,” and they demand real responses.

Second: a practical suggestion – Task the Committee with identification of specific measures by which the public can understand the degree of “colocation” for the stated purposes, the “productivity” and the “adoption” at the present. Task them to identify quantitative goals for achievement of these indicators over time, so that the degree of success will be clear. Indicators will help the public to understand that “Zero Waste” is best understood as concrete strategies, programs and behaviors, and not only a goal.

But some of the world has adopted a more holistic way of visualizing their economic and environmental future. Among other local and national governments, the European Union has made a strong commitment to developing a **circular economy**<sup>2</sup>:

*“A circular economy aims to maintain the value of products, materials and resources for as long as possible by returning them into the product cycle at the end of their use, while minimizing the generation of waste.*

*“The fewer products we discard, the less materials we extract, the better for our environment. This process starts at the very beginning of a product’s lifecycle: smart product design and production processes can help save resources, avoid inefficient waste management and create new business opportunities.*

*“The circular economy offers an opportunity to reinvent our economy, making it more sustainable and competitive. This brings benefits for businesses and citizens such as:*

- *more innovative and efficient ways of producing and consuming;*
- *protection for businesses against scarcity of resources and volatile prices;*
- *opportunities for local jobs and social integration*
- *optimization of waste management which boosts recycling and reduces landfill*
- *energy savings as less production processes requires less energy*
- *benefits for the environment in terms of climate and biodiversity, air, soil and water pollution.*

I am happy to see your Committee taking up H.454, and hope you will likewise take an interest in H.560, currently in your Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife, which extends EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) programs in Vermont. Finally, there are Senate efforts to roll back key provisions of Vermont’s Universal Recycling Law (Act 148 of 2012); the Supervisors of the Central Vermont District are on record in opposing many of these provisions, as are virtually all other solid waste entities. Maintaining and improving the landmark Act-148 legislation, and supporting its implementation through 2020 is the most important opportunity to work toward a zero-waste economy which will likely be presented to this General Assembly session.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/circular-economy>