

Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District

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January 9, 2018

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

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

Re: Testimony in support of H.560 - Conservation and development; hazardous waste; household and hazardous substances

Please accept this letter as testimony from the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District (NWSWD) in support of the draft legislation, H.560. My name is John Leddy, and I have been the District Manager of the NWSWD for the past 7 years. The NWSWD is responsible for assisting our member towns and their residents with all aspects of solid waste management, including waste disposal and planning, reduction, reuse, and recycling. An important component of our mission is the collection and proper management of hazardous waste from households and small businesses in our region. Our District is made up of 19 towns in Franklin and Grand Isle counties and has a population of 50,848.

The District operates a year-round permanent collection facility in Georgia for hazardous waste, providing our residents and small businesses with ample opportunity to keep these highly toxic wastes out of the landfill. The HazWaste Center is open five days per week. The NWSWD also mobilized our efforts for six remote collection events around Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. In all the NWSWD's services offered a total of 266 collection days last year. The number of households that use our facility has been steadily increasing. In 2017, 1,237 households brought hazardous waste to the District for disposal and we managed 57 tons of hazardous waste.

The District spends more than \$103,000 per year to collect, manage, and dispose of this material in and environmentally responsible manner. We receive a relatively small annual grant fund from the VT Agency of Natural Resources each year to assist with our costs, but this barely covers 25% of our hazardous waste program. The remainder of the funding for our programs comes in the form of a per-ton District fee that is assessed on an ever-diminishing volume of solid waste that is generated by our residents and fees charged to our HHW customers. These fees are often a deterrent to greater participation by our residents. However the program is funded now, the financial burden of this program falls on the resident in the form of an increase in surcharge, a raise in per capita fees, an increase in disposal fees or a combination of actions.

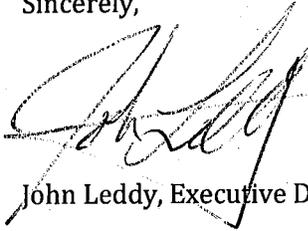
MEMBER COMMUNITIES

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HIGHGATE • ISLE LA MOTTE • MONTGOMERY • NORTH HERO • RICHFORD • ST. ALBANS CITY • ST. ALBANS TOWN
SHELDON • SOUTH HERO • SWANTON

As a member of the VT Product Stewardship Council, the District promotes Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as a means of establishing more effective collection systems for problem wastes while reducing the cost burden on Vermont's municipalities. We've already seen EPR yield success in Vermont with electronics, paint, mercury lamps, mercury thermostats, and batteries. Collection rates for these wastes in Vermont are some of the highest nationwide, largely due to the removal of disposal fees for these items as well as increased convenience and improved collection infrastructure. The funding mechanism proposed in H.560 will facilitate the creation of an efficient, convenient, statewide collection program for hazardous waste that would help eliminate any gaps in available services, while providing ample opportunities for all residents to manage these wastes properly.

I thank the Committee for your careful consideration of this bill, and for all of your efforts to make Vermont a cleaner, safer place to live.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Leddy", written over a horizontal dotted line.

John Leddy, Executive Director