

# Addison County Solid Waste Management District



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Middlebury, VT 05753

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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

Chairman Deen and Committee Members:

Please accept this letter as testimony from the Addison County Solid Waste Management District (ACSWMD) in support of the draft legislation, H.560. My name is Teresa Kuczynski. I have been the District Manager of the ACSWMD for the past 16 years. The ACSWMD is responsible for assisting our 20 member towns of Addison County 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 covers 700 square miles, with a population of 36,800.

The District operates a year-round permanent collection facility in Middlebury for hazardous waste, providing our residents and businesses with ample opportunity to keep these highly toxic wastes out of the landfill. The HazWaste Center is open six days per week, for a total of 308 collection days each year. The number of households that use our facility has been steadily increasing. In 2017, 2,469 households brought hazardous waste to the District for free disposal, which is a 9% increase over our 2016 participation. We managed 108 tons of hazardous waste at the HazWaste Center in 2017. We also accepted hazardous waste from 111 small businesses in the District, who find our facility a convenient and much more affordable alternative to using a private, often out-of-State, hazardous waste company for disposal.

While our household participation rate of around 17% makes our collection program a standout in comparison to national collection rates, success comes at an ever increasing cost. The District spends more than \$105,000 per year to collect and manage this material at its permanent facility, and is gearing up for an even more aggressive collection year in 2018 with the addition of several remote collection events around Addison County as mandated by the VT Materials Management Plan (MMP). While this will add to our costs, the revenues for paying for this program have remained neutral. Most 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 destined for disposal. We receive a

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relatively small annual grant fund from the VT Agency of Natural Resources each year to assist with our costs, but this barely covers 27% of our hazardous waste program.

The number of household products with toxic chemicals being marketed to homeowners today is staggering. Each year, our staff must determine the most cost-effective and environmentally safe method of disposing a myriad of constantly evolving chemical wastes, all while navigating a complex maze of Federal and State regulations designed to protect worker health and safety, and the environment. In the home, these wastes pose a risk of chemical exposure if improperly used or stored. In the trash, they present a tremendous hazard to waste collection personnel and facilities, eventually ending up as a potential groundwater contaminant once it reaches the landfill. Even more concerning are hazardous wastes that are illegally spilled or dumped onto the land, or disposed of directly into the waters of Vermont through drains or sewers.

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 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 eliminate any gaps in available services, while providing ample opportunities for all residents to manage these wastes properly.

Solid Waste Management Entities in Vermont will face many challenges in the coming years, especially as they struggle with the complexities of a fickle global recycling market, and the ambitious new waste diversion goals outlined in Vermont's Universal Recycling Law. These challenges will continue to strain our limited resources while we strive to keep up with the changing landscape of solid waste collection and diversion. Hazardous waste collection is one segment of our mission that is especially suited for product stewardship. It's time for Vermont to once again lead the nation in creating a successful collection system that protects the health of its residents and the environment.

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,

Teresa A. Kuczynski  
District Manager