

November 27, 2024

Mike Looney
Senior Advisor to the Commissioner
Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: CRCOG support for Materials Management Infrastructure Grant (MMI) Application (Wethersfield)

Dear Mike:

Please accept this letter from the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) in support of the Town of Wethersfield's application for a Materials Management Infrastructure (MMI) Grant Program to develop a regional organic material and food waste facility.

Connecticut disposes of approximately 2.2 million tons per year of municipal solid waste (MSW), with approximately 520,000 tons per year (or 22%+) being food waste. Food waste not only makes up a large portion of waste in landfills but contributes to increased methane (greenhouse gas) emissions and climate change. Diversion of food waste can save municipalities and taxpayers money on tipping fees, reduce our dependence on out-of-state transportation and our limited in-state disposal capacity, as well as address environmental and food insecurity issues in our communities.

Currently, CT state law requires businesses that generate more than 26 tons of food waste annually and are located within a 20-mile radius of a food scrap recycling facility to divert these materials from MSW. Effective January 1, 2025, state law will now require larger scale commercial diversion of food scraps from the solid waste stream by removing the radius requirement. Legislation has also been introduced to require institutions (including schools and educational facilities) to divert food waste from the solid waste stream.

The Town of Wethersfield, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA), and various public/private entities have been exploring options to develop a regional food waste and organic material

facility to serve Wethersfield and potentially surrounding communities. For half a century, local governments and municipalities in Connecticut have been primarily responsible for the financial and management burden of handling millions of tons of solid waste generated in this state, with over 860,000 tons per year of waste exported due to the closure of MIRA.

With a total population of nearly 1 million residents covering 1,047 square miles, CRCOG member municipalities have the potential to reduce and divert 100,000+/- tons of organic waste, 90,000+/- tons of recycled packaging and paper, and reduce up to 20% of residential waste disposed.

We are excited about the potential for this project and encourage CTDEEP to approve the Town's application in the amount requested. CRCOG pledges its commitment to be a strong, collaborative partner in this project.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 860-724-4232 or mhart@crcog.org.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Hart
Executive Director

CC: Fred Presley, Town of Wethersfield
Robyn Nichols, CRCOG
CCSWA Executive Committee
CRCOG Policy Board