



For a thriving New England

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June 28, 2021

By Email

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chair, House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: *House Bill No. 5923 Substitute A, An Act Relating to Health and Safety—High-Heat Waste Facility Act of 2021*

Dear Chair Bennett:

I am writing to convey Conservation Law Foundation's **strong support** for House Bill 5923 Substitute A. Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) is a member-supported nonprofit organization working to conserve natural resources, protect public health, and build healthy communities in Rhode Island and throughout New England. Through its Zero Waste Project, CLF aims to improve waste diversion and recycling programs and protect communities and our environment from the dangers of waste incineration and other high-heat waste processing.

CLF provided written and oral testimony in support of House Bill 5923 at the House Environment Committee's April 8, 2021 hearing on this bill. CLF strongly supports the Sub A currently under consideration. House Bill 5923A would prohibit any incineration, gasification, pyrolysis, or other high-heat waste processing facility:

- In any town or city with an environmental justice focus area;
- Within 1 mile of any area zoned residential, or any school, daycare, college, or assisted-living facility; or
- Within 2,000 feet of any waterway, floodplain, open space, or park.

These restrictions will protect Rhode Islanders, our environment, and the climate from the well-established dangers of burning waste. By passing this Sub A, Rhode Island can reaffirm its commitment to the goals and principles in the Act on Climate and protect its waters, green spaces, and residents (especially those already overburdened by sources of pollution).

All high-heat waste processing—including pyrolysis and so-called “advanced recycling”—is **toxic, highly polluting, and climate-damaging**. Burning waste, using high-heat to turn plastic into chemical feedstocks, and burning waste- and plastic-derived fuels all **emit** lead, mercury,



sulfur, and dioxins. House Bill 5923A will protect Rhode Islanders and our environment from these dangerous toxics.

Moreover, without House Bill 5923A, Rhode Island will be unable to meet the enforceable goals in the Act on Climate. Burning waste or waste-derived fuels emits climate-damaging gases like carbon dioxide. Turning plastics into fuel or chemicals [requires a significant amount of energy](#), which is almost always supplied by burning fossil fuels.

By restricting the siting and operation of facilities that burn waste and plastic, or turn waste and plastic into fuel, Rhode Island can put in place common sense measures to avoid the toxic and climate-damaging impacts of high-heat waste facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Budris".

Kevin Budris
Staff Attorney, CLF Zero Waste Project

cc: HouseEnvironmentandNaturalResources@rilegislature.gov
Representative Justine Caldwell (by Email)