
Public Hearing

before

ASSEMBLY SOLID AND HAZARDOUS WASTE COMMITTEE

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 1167

*(Revises the "Resource Recovery and Solid Waste
Disposal Facility Bond Act of 1985," appropriates \$5,000)*

LOCATION: Committee Room 12
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: June 4, 1998
2:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman John E. Rooney, Chair
Assemblyman Peter J. Biondi, Vice-Chair
Assemblyman Larry Chatzidakis
Assemblyman Melvin Cottrell
Assemblywoman Connie Myers
Assemblyman LeRoy J. Jones Jr.
Assemblyman Alfred E. Steele



ALSO PRESENT:

Algis P. Matioska
Leonard J. Colner
*Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aides*

Thea M. Sheridan
*Assembly Majority
Committee Aide*

Yolette Ross
*Assembly Democratic
Committee Aide*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Assemblywoman Connie Myers District 23	2
David Pringle Campaign Director New Jersey Environmental Federation	3
lmb: 1-4	

ASSEMBLYMAN JOHN E. ROONEY (Chair): Okay. Is everyone ready?

Okay. I'm going to call this meeting to order. This is the Assembly Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Committee (*sic*), and at this time I'm going to announce the order of the bills. So if you have other things to do, you may want to come back. The order of the bills will be-- First, we'll have a public hearing, as required by law, on A-1167, the Myers-Bagger bill revising the Resource Recovery and Solid Waste Disposal Facility Bond Act, appropriating \$5 million (*sic*). Then, we will go through the DEP environmental infrastructure projects in order as they appear on the list: A-2089, A-2090, A-2091, A-2092, ACR-98, AR-26.

We may call out if there are certain Assemblymen in the room such as Mr. Gibson sitting there. He has to be on early, but we do have to do the public hearing first, Jack. You'll be up right after that.

And then AR-26 has been referred. So that's my bill. Then, we'll start on the solid waste package. Assembly Bill No. 519 will be the first bill on the agenda. We will have three different versions of that, and then we will go with the rest of the series. Actually, there will be A-519 in order, then A-516, then A-515, A-517, A-518 in that order. There is quite a bit of testimony on that, I believe.

We have many representatives from the administration here today, which was contrary to previous meetings. We're happy to see them here. We'll have some interesting testimony on that.

So having said that, that's where we're going. If you haven't signed up, sign up now. Get us the sign-up sheets as quickly as possible, so we can schedule you into the meeting.

So the first bill on the agenda, as I said, is A-1167, the Resource Recovery and Solid Waste Disposal Facility Bond Act of 1985 appropriating 5 -- \$5000 it says -- 5 million. Five thousand.

Connie Myers. Assemblywoman Myers.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CONNIE MYERS: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate your scheduling this hearing, and I hope that this bill finally will be released from Committee. It's been pending since December of 1996 when we knew that the system of waste flow in New Jersey would leave so many counties in financial trouble because they had to reduce their tip fees in order to be competitive in a market environment.

This bill will provide \$62 million in existing monies that are available from previously approved bond issues in 1980 and 1985. It is money that will not be used for other purposes now because no counties are expected to look for public financing to build county-supported solid waste facilities given the new market environment. So it only makes sense to use existing monies, but we can't do this unless we go back to the voters because there are bond covenants that do not permit the administration to give -- to award these monies in the form of grants instead of loans. It's important to allow grants because most of the counties have a problem because they already have too much debt, and more loans is not going to be the answer. So the bill provides about \$62 million from those previous bond issues.

In addition, the bill forgives loans that have already been awarded and only partially paid back by a number of counties, and that will provide an additional \$62 million approximately to help pay off the statewide stranded debt. These monies will be available to any county that enters into the Partnership Agreement Program that's already been established by the Legislature and the administration a year ago through budget language and where there is already \$20 million available and another \$20 million expected to be available in the budget to be adopted this month.

So altogether this bill and the appropriations should give us about \$200 million to assist the 13 counties who have notified the Treasurer and the Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Environmental Protection that they need State assistance in order to remain competitive so that they can continue to assist in paying off the estimated \$1.5 billion in solid waste debt that's been incurred statewide.

Be happy to answer any questions from the Committee or anyone who's here. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: Thank you, Connie.

Let's see, we have one person in opposition. David Pringle from New Jersey Environmental Federation.

David, true to your word, one minute.

DAVID PRINGLE: Yes.

Again my name is David Pringle. I'm the Campaign Director of the New Jersey Environmental Federation.

As a stand-alone bill, we are forced to oppose this bill. We don't understand why we are looking to tax victims first. New Jersey taxpayers are

paying with their health and their pocketbook for this \$1.6 billion in debt when more than two-thirds of the debt is coming from incinerator companies. They should be forced to pay their fair share before we go to taxpayers. If this bill was part of a package of bills that had followed those guidelines, we could in concept support it, but as a stand-alone bill, we have to oppose it in consideration of taxpayers' health and pocketbooks.

ASSEMBLYMAN ROONEY: Thank you, David. Just about a minute.

We have David-- No. Dirk Hoffman (phonetic spelling) for the New Jersey--

Oh, okay, the trust bill.

So if no one else to testify for A-1167-- This is a public hearing, and at this point since I hear no one else to testify at it, I'll close the public hearing for A-1167.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)