

KEY MESSAGES: SMART TRASH IN TORRINGTON

Why Torrington Is Considering SMART Trash

- The status quo is no longer an option because the cost of providing waste collection is increasing:
 - Connecticut waste incinerators are rapidly ***running out of capacity*** which means an increasing amount of MSW will need to be shipped out state at higher cost – disposal costs could jump by 25% or more.
 - Without a change in approach providing waste services will put increased pressure on Torrington's taxpayers
- It is Torrington leadership's obligation to proactively evaluate any policy that benefits residents in a fiscally sound manner. SMART achieves this because it:
 - Is a proven way to ***save money*** by cutting trash and increasing recycling
 - Can proactively offset increasing costs and ***stay ahead of this crisis***
 - Will reduce the overall cost of trash collection for all residents and free up resources for use on other valuable services simply by changing the method used to fund trash collection.
- SMART is a fairer way to fund waste management. Under SMART residents pay based on how much of the service they use and in the process, it gives residents more control over how much they spend on their municipal waste collection services each month.

How SMART Trash Works

- ***Dispose of garbage in official standard trash bags*** available at local retail outlets.
- Still ***put trash out curbside in town-provided carts***
- Pay for solid waste ***like we pay for other utilities*** (water, gas, electricity)—by the unit instead of flat rate
- Purchase price of bags helps ***cover cost of trash disposal***
- ***Trash drops and recycling rises*** because ***residents are motivated*** to throw away less and recycle more.

Benefits of SMART Trash for Torrington

- **Reduce residential MSW by 44%**
 - **Financial Impact** (NOTE: Assumes bags priced at \$2.70/\$1.70/\$1.20)
 - \$2.1 Million Annual Budget Reduction
 - \$427 Thousand Annual Trash Disposal Savings
 - **Fairness**
 - More fairly distributes the cost of waste collection according to each individual's specific service consumption.
 - Allows people to control spending on garbage
 - **Environmental**
 - Greenhouse gas savings: **Equivalent to taking 2,200 passenger cars off the road** each year
 - Energy savings: **Equivalent to total annual energy use of 830 households** each year

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

- **Has Torrington already decided to adopt SMART Trash?**
 - No—We are simply exploring the feasibility of the program (with support from the state).
- **Does SMART Trash change anything about how a household manages its trash?**
 - No— Residents would still put their trash out in the same way that they do now, and there is no limit to the amount they can throw away; the *only change is the color of the bag that they use*.
- **Where would residents buy SMART Trash bags?**
 - SMART Trash bags would be *available at the full range of retail outlets* in and around Torrington where people currently buy their trash bags: grocery stores, big-box stores, hardware stores, convenience stores, and others.

- **How many SMART Trash bags does the average household use in a week?**
 - Because a SMART Trash system gives people incentives to throw away less and recycle more, they produce less trash—less than 1 large bag or slightly more than 1 small *bag per week*, on average.
- **How much could an average-size household expect to spend on SMART Trash bags?**
 - The average household would *spend approximately \$1.37 per week on SMART Trash bags*.
- **Why is Torrington exploring a bag-based SMART Trash program?**
 - Multiple studies around the country have demonstrated that bag-based SMART Trash is the most effective system for reducing waste, increasing recycling, and having a positive financial impact.
 - SMART will allow create a more equitable way to cover disposal costs.
- **Does SMART Trash increase illegal trash dumping?**
 - No—According to multiple studies, public works directors, and other municipal leaders with similar programs across the country
- **Does SMART Trash help seniors?**
 - Yes—Seniors throw away much less than the average household and save money with SMART Trash.
- **Does SMART Trash help low-income residents?**
 - Yes—Expenses are low because the average household buys just *1 large bags per week*, and people can have the *ability to control spending on trash*.
- **Is SMART a new concept?**
 - PAYT is not new or unique. Programs have been in effect for over 25 years in the US and are currently operating in more than 140 cities and towns in New England alone.
- **Are SMART programs effective?**
 - Yes - 100% of the Cities and Towns that have implemented PAYT in New England have reduced trash, increased recycling and saved money.
- **How prevalent is SMART Trash across the US?**
 - In *more than 8,000 cities and towns* (according to US EPA)

- **Why is there a reduction in landfill capacity in the region?**
 - Landfills are under pressure throughout New England. In Massachusetts alone, the number of operating landfills has decreased from 300 in 1980 to less than 10 today.
- **What is WasteZero's role in this initiative?**
 - WasteZero is a national leader in municipal waste reduction that CT DEEP has contracted to help the town evaluate how a SMART Trash system could help us.