

# Connecticut Reaches Deal On Fracking Waste Bill

SUSAN HAIGH, Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Connecticut's Senate endorsed a bipartisan compromise on how to handle the possibility of waste coming to Connecticut from hydraulic fracturing operations in other states.

The legislation creates a moratorium on the waste being stored or disposed in the state until the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection adopts regulations on the matter. Under the bill, DEEP would have until July 1, 2017, to submit its proposed regulations to the General Assembly's Regulations Review Committee.

Initially, lawmakers had considered an outright ban on drilling fluid and other waste generated as a byproduct of gas exploration, commonly known as fracking, in Connecticut. However, that proposal drew criticism from some lawmakers who considered the move premature and possibly unfair because the state is expanding a network of natural gas pipes and equipment while wanting to leave other states to clean up the waste.

"We're taking a more moderate approach," said Sen. Edward Meyer, D-Guilford. "It's an incremental type of approach."

Following five hours of debate, the Senate agreed to place the bill on the consent calendar, a list of bills that all of the members support. The bill still needs support from the House of Representatives before the legislative session adjourns on Wednesday at midnight.

While there is no fracking occurring in Connecticut, Meyer said there's some concern a ban on the process could be lifted in neighboring New York and waste could be trucked here.

"This bill is being offered to the legislature and to the people of Connecticut in order to avoid what many people feel is a danger to our security and our safety and health," he said, adding how "it's better to be safe than sorry."

Sen. L. Scott Frantz, R-Greenwich, said he planned to support the bill but questioned whether it's really necessary.

"At this point, if we continue to do this and we continue to do other bills that proactively ban things, we might as well be banning the sky from falling and telling Chicken Little to go home, close the door and lock it," he said.

Sen. Kevin Witkos, R-Canton, said he believes not enough is known about the waste from hydraulic fracturing to say whether Connecticut should store it or treat it here.

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"I think it doesn't close the door," he said of the bill. "I think it says, take your time, study the issue, and find out if there are harmful effects."

The bill also bars the use of fracking waste in Connecticut as a road deicer and for other purposes including suppressing dust, until applicable regulations are developed.

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