



# PRESS RELEASE

## City of Torrington

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### CHANGES IN COMMERCIAL TIPPING FEES

August 8, 2003

At the May, 20<sup>th</sup> 2003 City Council Meeting, the Board of Councilmen unanimously passed a resolution to stop paying for all non-municipal solid waste disposal fees. This action was taken as a result of significant increases in the tonnage of commercial solid waste being disposed of in the City and significant increases in the disposal costs (tipping fees). This change is expected to be only the first step in better managing and controlling solid waste in the City. Currently a Solid Waste Advisory Committee is investigating the levels of solid waste services provided with the goal of developing programs and policies to minimize costs while maintaining the proper level of service.

The total amount of solid waste disposed of in 2003 was 35,498 tons, 62 percent of which was commercial. The commercial solid waste disposal in Torrington increased over 22% this past year, going from 17,853 tons in 2002 to 21,849 tons in 2003. The 22% increase, combined with the significant tipping fee increases would have caused a budget increase in excess of \$375,000. The Environmental Protection Agency has calculated that commercial solid waste should represent only 35 percent to 45 percent of the total, again demonstrating the problems and issues with increasing tons of commercial waste being disposed of in the City. Combined with serious budget cuts by the State of Connecticut, the City of Torrington could no longer tolerate the uncontrolled disposal of commercial solid wastes. Total solid waste management costs were projected to be 3.5 million dollars in 2004 and over 5 million dollars by 2010. To minimize the budget impact and allow control over the disposal and recycling of commercial wastes, the Board of Councilmen took the action to stop these costs. This action is also consistent with over 90 percent of the cities and towns, as surveyed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, that do not pay for commercial solid waste tipping fees.

With the commercial properties controlling and paying for their solid waste management, the budget savings to all Torrington taxpayers is estimated at approximately 1.4 million dollars per year. With improvements in the commercial recycling rates from the present 12% to the state average of 25%, the impact to the commercial properties would be reduced to 1.1 million dollars per year.

The City recommends that all commercial establishments work with their waste haulers to properly size their dumpster and service frequency. It is also important that businesses maximize their recycling operations to minimize the tons disposed of at the current tipping fee of \$63.75 per ton.