



BACKGROUND

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A Brief History of the Hartford Landfill

The City of Hartford opened the landfill on Leibert Road in the North Meadows for use as an open-burning dump in 1940.

In 1951, the Hartford Fire Department burned shacks erected on the landfill by "dump dwellers." Between 1953 and 1977 all waste produced in the City of Hartford was burned in the then-state-of-the-art Hartford incinerator. Byproducts from the burning were emitted into the air without any pollution controls. During this period the landfill received incinerator ash and bulky wastes.

Residents of the North End of Hartford complained for years that their cars parked outside were covered with soot, dust and ash which, they said, came from the incinerator.

The incinerator was shut down in 1977 as the result of a lawsuit filed by the Town of East Hartford. East Hartford residents had complained about a cloud that hung over their town which, they charged, came from the incinerator.

The City of Hartford leased the landfill to the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRRA) in 1982. Until 1988, the landfill received raw municipal solid waste (MSW), non-processible MSW and bulky waste.

Following its leasing the site from the city, CRRRA installed several environmental control systems at the landfill, all of which will function for a minimum of 30 years after the landfill is closed:

- A gas extraction and collection system in which dozens of wells capture gas before it enters the air, virtually eliminating odors, while using that gas to generate enough electricity to power about 1,500 homes.
- A slurry wall, made of Bentonite clay, poured around three sides of the landfill. The slurry wall, when connected to the steel sheet piling in the flood control dike along the Connecticut River, creates, in effect, a giant bathtub to ensure that whatever is put in the landfill stays there and does not spread into neighboring land or ground water.
- A groundwater collection and pumping system that captures and treats groundwater that may flow under the landfill.
- An ash-leachate collection system that collects and treats rain water percolating through the ash landfill.
- A groundwater monitoring program ensuring the area surrounding the landfill is safe and remains so.
- A landfill gas monitoring program ensuring the area surrounding the landfill is safe and remains so.

Some residents blamed the landfill for incidences of asthma and other diseases.

However, [a 1998 study by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#), concluded that "air emissions generated by the Hartford landfill do not pose any short-term or long-term health effects to residents who live nearby."

In 2003, as the landfill began nearing its permitted capacity, the CRRRA Board of Directors commissioned a study to gauge the feasibility of expanding the Hartford landfill. The study found that the landfill's footprint would allow a maximum height of 188 feet, compared to its permitted height of 138 feet, and could do so without compromising either the flood control dike or the slurry wall.

Residents were opposed to the idea of expansion. So in 2004, [the CRRRA Board of Directors, agreeing that the people of Hartford should be relieved of the burden of living near an active landfill](#), voted to abandon the idea of expansion.



In 2007, CRRA began installation of a state-of-the-art synthetic cap that effectively sealed the landfill and its contents from the surrounding environment. Installation was completed in 2014; the final phase included a 3,993-panel solar energy facility that can generate enough electricity to power about 1,000 homes when operating at full capacity.