Rural areas like Litchfield County are now at greater risk of being named as potential sites, because the changes give greater consideration to population density, drinking water supplies and proximity to public facilities and private institutions.

Mr. Fleming and State Senate Minority Leader M. Adelo Eads of Kent supported failed amendments to the bill that would have required a temporary storage facility at or near one of the state's nuclear power plants, and decreased the importance of population density in the selection process.

"Unfairly Targets'

"This law unfairly targets the rural, lesser populated parts of the state, which happen to be the Northwest Corner and the northeast corner," said Charlene LaVoie, Winsted's community lawyer, a leader in Connecticut's anti-nuclear power effort.

"If this comes to fruition, they can look forward to vigorous opposition in the Northwest Corner," she said. "There is a political perception that it's easier to deal with an area with less people."

"That is not true and it misstates very badly what the bill does," responded Republican State Representative Kevin Rennie of South Windsor, a chief dump opponent who also originally pressed for temporary storage at Millstone, since the power plants generate more than 60 percent of the state's low-level waste.

This waste consists of items such as clothing, paper towels and equipment that become contaminated with radioactivity. It does not include nuclear fuel or