



TESTIMONY **IN OPPOSITION** of **HB 5437**
AAC MANDATE RELIEF
March 15, 2024

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. McCroy and Rep. Currey, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition of HB 5437. CTLCV is specifically concerned with **Section 8** of the bill which would add a twenty-mile radius limitation to send organic food waste to authorized source-separated organic material composting facility.

Food waste currently makes up about 22% of Connecticut's waste stream, and a significant portion comes from wasted food in our schools. Private and public schools produce over 26 tons of food scraps every year, and we urge the committee to not allow these facilities to be excluded from food waste mandates.

Exempting schools from the law passed in 2023 that took away the twenty-mile radius for institutions that create more than 26 tons of wasted food a year would hinder our progress in diverting wasted food.

While over 83,000 children and minorities are falling victim to food insecurity in Connecticut, all major producers of food waste should be required to donate their surplus food to food rescue organizations.

Additionally, excluding private and public schools from composting will deny Connecticut children the opportunity to learn about composting and food scrap diversion. It is important to educate our youth on these positive resources and programs to further encourage the practice of composting for the environment and community.

CTLCV urges the committee to OPPOSE HB 5437 Section 8 to fight against food insecurity in Connecticut and support robust food scrap diversion programs that make sure good, surplus food does not go to waste.

Thank you for considering our comments.