



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT OF HB 6229**
AN ACT CONCERNING A REDUCTION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS AND
POLYSTYRENE WASTE
March 17, 2025

To: Honorable Co-Chairs Sen. Lopes and Rep. Parker, and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Connor Yakaitis, Deputy Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of CTLCV and our thousands of members across the state, **we strongly support HB 6229**, which will take crucial steps toward reducing plastic pollution by eliminating polystyrene food containers and restricting single-use plastics.

Lawmakers have been discussing possible solutions to our waste crisis for many years, particularly plastics and polystyrene. It is important to note that the bill currently has 33 cosponsors. This legislation is a significant opportunity to take action that will make a difference. **Currently, one-third of students in Connecticut do not use polystyrene trays for food out of concerns for public health and the environment.** We cannot continue to let this inequity be tolerated.

Plastic pollution is a growing and urgent environmental threat, impacting our health, wildlife, and natural ecosystems. **Every year, millions of tons of plastic waste enter our waterways and oceans, breaking down into harmful microplastics** that contaminate the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

Here in Connecticut, plastic debris from urban areas and inland communities flows into our rivers and ultimately into Long Island Sound, degrading water quality and harming marine life. The damage extends beyond environmental concerns—plastic pollution threatens Connecticut’s fishing industry, tourism economy, and coastal communities that rely on clean waters.

By passing HB 6229, Connecticut has the opportunity to take a leadership role in reducing single-use plastics and protecting public health, wildlife, and our environment.

One of the most concerning aspects of plastic waste is the presence of microplastics—tiny plastic particles found in the human body, wildlife, and even in newborns. Scientists have detected microplastics in human lungs, bloodstreams, and even placentas, raising serious concerns about potential health impacts. We do not yet fully understand the long-term consequences of microplastic exposure, but early research suggests links to hormonal disruption, immune system damage, and increased cancer risks.

Polystyrene (commonly known as Styrofoam) is one of the most dangerous plastics. It contains styrene, a likely carcinogen, which can leach into food and beverages. This is particularly concerning for children, who are more vulnerable to toxic chemical exposure. Schools across Connecticut still use polystyrene trays and food containers, exposing students to potentially harmful substances on a daily basis.

The European Union has already banned polystyrene due to its toxicity and environmental harm. Several U.S. states, including New York, Maine, Vermont, and Maryland, have also taken decisive action to prohibit polystyrene food packaging. Connecticut must do the same to protect public health and the environment.

Single-use plastics and polystyrene waste have devastating consequences for wildlife and ocean ecosystems. Each year, plastic pollution kills millions of marine animals, including fish, sea turtles, whales, and seabirds, who mistakenly ingest plastic debris. Connecticut's coastal waters and Long Island Sound are critical habitats for marine species and a key economic resource. Yet, plastic pollution is degrading these ecosystems, contaminating fish populations and threatening our coastal economy.

When polystyrene breaks apart, it never fully decomposes. Instead, it fragments into microscopic plastic particles that persist in the environment for centuries. These microplastics accumulate in seafood, meaning that Connecticut residents are likely consuming plastic particles when they eat locally caught fish and shellfish. Reducing plastic waste is not only an environmental necessity but also a public health imperative.

By passing H.B. 6229, Connecticut can join other forward-thinking states in taking meaningful action to reduce plastic pollution, protect public health, and preserve our environment for future generations. This bill is a necessary step toward a cleaner, healthier Connecticut where we are not exposed to toxic food containers, wildlife is not suffocating on plastic waste, and our waterways remain pristine.

CTLCV urges the Environment Committee and the full General Assembly to vote YES on HB 6229. This bill aligns with Connecticut's environmental priorities, protects human health, and ensures a sustainable future for our state.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to protecting Connecticut's environment. We strongly urge you to support this critical legislation.

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