



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 6502

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS THE AVAILABILITY OF SINGLE-USE STRAWS, THE RELEASE OF CERTAIN BALLOONS AND THE COMPOSTABLE NATURE OF SINGLE-USE PRODUCT BAGS

March 3, 2021

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Borer and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Megan Macomber, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN SUPPORT of HB 6502** to phase out the use of certain polystyrene trays and food containers, prohibit the automatic distribution of single-use plastic straws at certain eating establishments, prohibit the intentional release of certain helium balloons and examine the compostable nature of certain single-use produce bags.

Polystyrene products and single-use plastics are rarely biodegradable and can remain in the environment years after they are discarded by the consumer. These products are not recyclable so they go to landfills or incinerators where they further contribute to Connecticut's poor air quality.

It is critical that this bill not conflict with any town bans on polystyrene across CT. Any statewide ban must not preempt municipalities from passing or implementing policies regarding polystyrene that are stricter than what the State prescribes. Statewide measures should provide a baseline of environmental protection, not a ceiling.

Polystyrene, balloons and single use plastic bags all pose serious threats to marine ecosystems and wildlife. Birds and aquatic animals can ingest these materials, eventually leading to poisoning or starvation. These products can also breakdown into microplastics and accumulate in environments where they can eventually be ingested by humans.

CTLCV would like to emphasize that **bags labeled 'compostable' are often only able to breakdown properly in the extreme environments of anaerobic digestion**. It is critical that a study of compostable bags include whether these products break down completely in normal compost and aquatic environments.

We at CTLCV urge the committee to **SUPPORT HB 6502** and phase out polystyrene products, single use straws, balloon releases and carefully study the compostable nature of certain single use bags. Thank you for considering these comments.