

In support of HB 6141...

GreenTeam-IAR

For the past 6 years, I have worked with hundreds of middle-school and high school students in the Town of Farmington in a very active environmental organization called GreenTeam. This group has now grown to become the largest youth environmental group in the state with over 100 active members in our middle school alone. GreenTeam has been strongly involved in **litter cleanups, town stewardship, and legislative advocacy.** The proposal before you today grew from a discussion that took off after school last December between myself and a group of GreenTeam's leaders and most active members. On that dark December afternoon, we ended up discussing how our families were feeling the impact of our economic downturn. We found ourselves one positive: seeing the green economy as a genuinely bright horizon. Still, we wondered whether our state was somehow positioning itself to be among the few cutting-edge beneficiaries. Or would we find ourselves in several years watching enviously from the sidelines -- like most other states will -- scrambling *reactively* rather than emerging *proactively*?

What would Connecticut need to do to be one of the few states to emerge stronger from the next couple of years? We decided that to get it right, we would need to become known regionally and nationally as a state outstanding for its **ability to root and grow green businesses.** How do we do that -- especially in a budget crisis? Without having to provide capital we don't have at the moment, Connecticut can incubate green enterprises in our state by **providing state-owned property and buildings for green innovation and development parks.** Connecticut can provide **pronounced tax incentives to promising green enterprises -- and tax-free time-windows** for green businesses to develop their footing. We recall in the past couple of years, outgoing-Speaker Amann wanted to make Connecticut become "**HollywoodEast**" by establishing policies that would powerfully catch the interest and business of movie producers. *We* would like to see Connecticut energetically emulate *another* west-coast model: "**SeattleEast**". Seattle has been in the forefront of both leading-edge business development and green technologies and policies.

We also have in mind one green business we discovered through multiple referrals from GreenTeam families as representing the ultimate of what we envision for Connecticut. That business is TerraCycle.

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It has been featured on national network news, and heralded as one of the most innovative businesses nationally of the past several years. It is headquartered in Trenton, NJ, with branches now in Atlanta and Toronto. It is also looking to expand its concepts (where better than Connecticut?) with additional business ventures based on its own special niche:

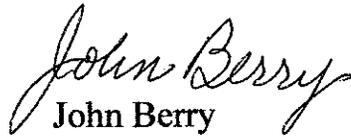
upcycling. Basically, TerraCycle first became a **business phenomena** by making liquefied worm-poop into a **premium fertilizer**, which it packaged in reclaimed soda bottles (*NJ is not a Bottle Bill state!*). Home Depot now distributes the product, and TerraCycle has gone on to successfully upcycle other products, including backpacks and lunch boxes made from Capri Suns and similar durably-packaged products. These new products are now marketed at Walmart, Target and other national chains. A very cool innovation accompanies all of TerraCycle's "material sourcing": they have empowered school groups, civic organizations and charities by making them "brigades": groups that receive funds for collecting items like yogurt containers (#5 plastics) and Capri Sun packets that are *unrecycled* -- even in progressive states like ours! (These groups have the postage paid for their collection by TerraCycle -- in addition to the 2-cents to 5-cents the group gets as container rebates).

We believe that TerraCycle would be an incredible flagship if Connecticut could successfully make our state TerraCycle's "Second Home". We think Connecticut should *aggressively* try to get this business as a symbol of how serious we are to become SeattleEast, the incubator of green businesses *beyond the obvious ones* like green renewable energies (which *all* states will be wooing aggressively). [Green energy producers obviously are among the many enterprises we should *also* cordially favor]. We think that getting Terracycle to be able to expand its imagination in a Connecticut-provided green-incubation/development park would be worth bending over backwards for-- giving it time to take root with "uncommon hospitality" -- because this would be such a perfect symbol of Connecticut's intent to be foremost in hospitality to green innovation and entrepreneurship. We should give the state's business development agency a green light to do whatever it takes to win over Terracycle as such a powerfully-symbolic business, while providing "quite hospitable opportunities" to other green businesses as well.

GreenTeam would also like to see businesses take off in Connecticut that **make products out of the materials that Connecticut already**

recycles (like pelletized #1 and #2 plastics...). As a bottle bill state, Connecticut has provided itself an edge here that *4/5th of our states lack* -- a continual stream of recycling materials. These enterprises should *also* be promoted through the proposed green incubation and development policies.

A task force should be charged to quickly identify and implement policies that will put Connecticut in the forefront for fostering green enterprises. We will either seize this moment -- to the credit of this committee -- or we cede the day to other states that put themselves in place to make the right things happen for their citizens and their fiscal and employment futures instead. Thank you for giving this your timely consideration.



John Berry

GreenTeam Founder & Advisor