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Education Committee
February 23, 2009
Testimony of Martin Mador
In Support of
HB6496 An Act Concerning Green Cleaning Products in Schools

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the Legislative and Political Chair of the Connecticut Sierra Club, and am here today representing our 10,000 Connecticut members concerned about the health of our environment, our economic prosperity, and our quality of life. I am also the Legislative Co-Chair of the Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools (ConnFESS). I possess a Master's of Environmental Management degree from Yale. I am LEED accredited by the US Green Building Council.

Sierra considers the intentional introduction of toxins into our lives an important environmental issue, and is pleased to be, in partnership with ConnFESS, the principal proponent of this legislation. Addressing this issue in state level legislation is both appropriate and necessary.

I have testified before the General Assembly on green and healthy school issues every year since 2002. Starting with PA 03-220, An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality in Schools, and continuing with PA 07-242, which requires green school construction, Connecticut has gradually instituted requirements to provide healthy, safe, and productive environments for our children and school staff. Children spend one third of their early lives in school buildings which have four times the occupant density of commercial offices. Their growing bodies are far more susceptible to toxins and contaminants than adults. Protecting the health of our students and thereby enabling them to excel academically, must be one of our highest priorities.

HB 6496 continues this focus on healthy schools by addressing a key issue of school operation and maintenance. Many traditionally used cleaning products have been shown to have health implications. They are asthma triggers, endocrine disrupters, producers of toxics gases when mixed, and causitive agents for rashes and headaches. Long term exposures are implicated in cancer, reproductive disorders, and organ failure.

The Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS), perhaps the most knowledgable organization on green schools, says in their Maintenance and Operations Manual:

> *Dollar for dollar the single best investment a school can make with their maintenance budget is to adopt and implement a well-run green cleaning program.*

The bill requires only products with third party certification be approved for use. This is an important safeguard which assures that products not certified as safe will not be used. Because Green Seal, the prime certifying organization, requires that vendors provide no-cost training to ensure proper use of the product to receive their certification, school districts are assured they will receive this training without cost.