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Environment Committee
300 Capitol Avenue
Room 3200 LOB
Hartford, CT 06106

Re:
Bill No. 5215 AN ACT IMPOSING A FIVE CENT FEE ON PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS PROVIDED BY RETAIL STORES
Bill No. 5207 AN ACT IMPOSING A TAX ON PAPER AND PLASTIC BAGS
Bill No. 5492 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECYCLING OF PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS
Bill No. 5466 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECYCLING OF PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS AT RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS
Bill No. 661 (Raised) AN ACT EXPANDING THE BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROVISIONS TO INCLUDE NONCARBONATED BEVERAGES.
Bill No. 662 AN ACT EXPANDING THE BEVERAGE CONTAINER REDEMPTION PROVISIONS TO INCLUDE WATER BOTTLES.

Dear Committee Members,

I would like to offer my **SUPPORT** for all of the above listed bills concerning plastic bags and the beverage container redemption expansion.

According to the EPA, over 380 billion plastic bags, sacks and wraps are consumed in the U.S. each year.¹ The numbers worldwide are staggering. The impact on our environment caused by the improper disposal of these bags is almost irreversible as plastic bags once introduced to an ecological system are a permanent fixture. Plastic bag pollution endures because plastics do not decompose but only break up into smaller pieces and further infiltrate our water and soil.

Other countries have taken drastic steps to reduce plastic bag pollution with much success. **In Ireland after implementing a plastic bag tax the use of plastic bags dropped by 90%.²** Recently Seattle, Washington and Westport, CT have implemented taxes and bans on the retail use of plastic bags. Many other cities and states are examining legislation to impose fees and mandatory recycling to reduce the impact of plastic bags on our environment.

Beverage containers not currently subject to redemption are the brother of the plastic bag. While carbonated beverage containers are largely recycled thru the redemption program their plastic and glass brethren are strewn by the roadside where they become permanent markers of a disposable oriented society. There is slim chance an enterprising individual will pick them up for recycling because they possess no value to the regular consumer. There is no reason for the exclusion of noncarbonated containers; they are completely recyclable as the carbonated ones.

Paper bags must be included in any legislation as a fee item. The production of paper bags requires more energy to produce than plastic, to push consumers from plastic to paper shifts energy consumption without reduction.

The imposition of a fee on *both plastic and paper bags* will force consumers to take notice of an item they typically see as trash. The same philosophy applies to our noncarbonated beverage containers.

When an item costs money, even a small amount, it is suddenly a commodity not a piece of trash.

¹ www.reusablebags.com "Fast Facts"

² source, reusablebags.com

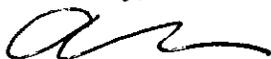
The real underlying problem with the use of plastics is the lack of recycling. Plastic in all its forms is an energy efficient, convenient product. Capturing and recycling the billions of tons per year the United States produces in plastic waste will facilitate a cleaner environment and reduce our demand for petroleum.

A mindset of recycling and re-use is the solution to our wasteful consumption of plastic and other resources. Placing a monetary value on our plastics coupled with single-stream mandatory recycling statewide will reduce CT's consumption of natural resources.

The old adage, if each person swept in front of their own door, the world would be clean, epitomizes the need for ecologically responsible behavior at the state level.

Let Connecticut join the trend enacting green legislation supporting the responsible handling of plastics as a valuable, re-usable commodity.

Sincerely,



Alesia DiFederico

Sources for plastics/recycling information:

OLR 2008-R-0421

OLR 2008-R-0607