



Connecticut Retail Merchants Association
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Timothy G. Phelan
President

February 9, 2011

Senator Edward Meyer, Chairman
Representative Richard Roy, Chairman
Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairmen Meyer and Roy:

My name is Tim Phelan and I am the President of the Connecticut Retail Merchants Association (CRMA). CRMA is a statewide trade association representing over 500 retail businesses with over 2000 stores throughout the state. Our membership includes some of the world's largest retailers along with the state's main street merchants.

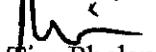
I am here today to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 58, An Act Establishing a Fee for the Use of Plastic and Paper Bags at Grocery and Retail Establishments. This bill would impose a new fee at a time when our customers and the retail industry face unprecedented economic challenges. Retailers throughout the state are climbing back from the most difficult economic period in recent memory and any new cost, such as the one that would be imposed by this bill would have a severe negative effect on them. Simply put, retailers would incur additional costs in order to make changes in their point of sale systems to collect this new fee at a time when they are struggling to stay in business. In addition, under the bill retailers would not get any allowance for collection of this new fee to help offset that cost.

We feel strongly that this new fee would have a negative impact on our customers. While we agreed that the fee on its face is small, only .05 cents, we are concerned that most of our customers would not appreciate any additional fees imposed on them, especially during these difficult economic times.

CRMA does support recycling of plastic and paper bags but does not support this approach. Rather we would suggest the committee look to New York State as a model for in store recycling efforts.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Sincerely,



Tim Phelan
President