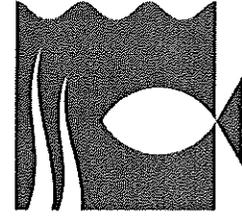


**Connecticut Fund  
for the Environment**



**Save the Sound<sup>®</sup>**  
A program of  
Connecticut Fund for the Environment

Environment Committee  
Public Hearing  
February 9, 2011

Submitted by: Charles J. Rothenberger, Staff Attorney

Regarding:

Senate Bill No. 58, AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FEE FOR THE USE OF PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS AT GROCERY AND RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS.

*Connecticut Fund for the Environment ("CFE") is Connecticut's non-profit environmental advocate with over 6,500 members statewide. For over thirty years, CFE has fought to protect and preserve Connecticut's health and environment.*

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee, Connecticut Fund for the Environment offers this testimony regarding Senate Bill No. 58, An Act Establishing A Fee For The Use Of Plastic And Paper Bags At Grocery And Retail Establishments.

CFE supports initiatives that will reduce the use of disposable bags in Connecticut and the environmental burden that they create. CFE's Save The Sound program has led the International Coastal Cleanup in Connecticut since 2002. Volunteers with that effort have collected around 56,000 plastic and paper bags in the state since 1988.

CFE recognizes that imposing user fees on disposable bags can significantly reduce the use of such bags and move individuals to use durable reusable bags for their shopping needs. We understand that similar fee systems have been adopted in both Ireland and Washington, DC. Although we do not have the exact figures, in both cases the programs report outstanding successes in reducing bag use. Accordingly, we support the bill's provision to impose a five cents fee on disposable bags at the point of sale.

CFE also strongly supports, however, local efforts to go beyond imposing a user fee and to ban the use of disposable bags altogether if such communities should choose to do so. Accordingly, we oppose section (1) (f) of the bill, which would prohibit municipalities from adopting any ordinance restricting the retail use of disposable bags. We urge the Committee to eliminate this preemption of local initiatives contained in the current draft of the bill.

Finally, we support the bill's intent that any expenditure of the funds collected from the bag fee be dedicated to DEP programs.