



**Environment Committee
Public Hearing
February 22, 2012**

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SB 89: An Act Establishing a Mattress Stewardship Program

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a non-partisan, statewide organization comprised of over 1800 members and committed to effective public policy and the active involvement of citizens in their government. On behalf of the League, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut has consistently supported statewide recycling and environmentally sound waste disposal. We applaud the Environment Committee for providing strong leadership for efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle solid waste. In the last session of the General Assembly, you approved the establishment of a paint stewardship program to provide for the safe disposal of unused or unwanted paint. Today you will hear testimony about the disposal of 350,000 to 450,000 mattresses each year in our state. Every town and city wrestles with this problem and during the winter months we can see evidence of poor mattress disposal along our otherwise scenic local roads.

SB 89 is an example of “Product Stewardship” or “Extended Product Responsibility” where we ask the producer to design a product with its end use in mind or to help pay for costs associated with its safe disposal. In some instances, it encourages companies to take back products at the end of their useful life, as with automobile batteries. In other cases it encourages producers to design products initially for optimum reuse and recycling.

This bill calls for producers to create a non-profit organization to provide for the statewide collection and disposal of post-consumer mattresses. It suggests a funding mechanism for the program based on each producer’s annual market share or an alternative producer-financed funding mechanism.

The bill exempts producers who sell fewer than one thousand mattresses a year. It also exempts producers with less than one-tenth of one percent of the national market share. It is not a voluntary program and producers must comply with the bill's provisions. A list of participating producers will be maintained on the DEEP website and retailers will be prohibited from selling mattress brands of non-participating producers.

While to some this may seem like picking winners and losers, it has a solid public policy objective. Mattresses sold in Connecticut will have a producer-financed statewide disposal program with fewer mattresses in our landfills or along our roadways.