



Park City *Green*

“A mattress recycling company”

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012

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

Dear Senator Meyer and Representative Roy:

My name is Bradford Mitchell I am here today representing Park City Green, a mattress recycling facility in Bridgeport to express support for **Senate Bill 89, An Act Establishing a Mattress Stewardship Program**.

Park City Green is a startup not for profit enterprise in the City of Bridgeport with a mission to provide economic development for the Bridgeport region, create sustainable living wage jobs for some of the region's most vulnerable and hardest to employ citizen's and provide a sustainable and environmentally sound way to dispose of mattresses and divert them from landfills and mass burn facilities.

Approximately 85 percent of the millions of mattresses and box springs thrown into landfills and incinerators nationwide every year are recyclable. These mattresses are a dangerous nuisance in the waste stream: they take up large amounts of space at transfer stations and landfills, create flammable air pockets and do not burn well in our incinerators, do not compact well, and can create dangerous conditions for workers. The rapidly rising costs of disposal are supported by tax payers.

One alternative to burning or sending mattresses to remote out-of-state landfills is to deconstruct them and to recycle the components (such as polyurethane foam, wood, cotton, and metal). This process creates entry level jobs that are appropriate for people with barriers to employment. As the only not for profit mattress recycler in the entire North East, the Bridgeport facility aims to keep 100,000 mattresses per year out of the incinerators and to provide jobs with benefits for at least 15-20 workers.

The process is simple. Used mattresses and box-springs will be collected from municipal transfer stations, institutions such as hospitals, universities and mattress retailers, and brought to our facility in Bridgeport. Workers separate the mattresses into their component parts and prepare them for recycling. The resulting commodities are then sold on the market to manufacturers such as carpet pad makers (who buy the polyurethane foam), steel recyclers here in Connecticut (who purchase metal springs), and textile companies (for the cotton). Workers learn valuable warehouse skills such as forklift driving, baling, and materials handling.



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The principal goal of this project is to reduce the unemployment rate of the City of Bridgeport that stands at 13.5% as of December 2010, and, according to our workforce investment board, reaches 25-30% in our most disadvantaged neighborhoods. This program can employ the City’s most difficult to employ residents: those who have been chronically un or under-employed such as previously incarcerated youth, veterans who have not reintegrated well into society after recent tours of duty, those who have suffered foreclosures, and single parents. The target population includes those with minimal education and skills who may not have high school diplomas.

Park City Green has already seen keen interest in mattress recycling from many municipalities, businesses and Connecticut residents who want to make sure that their old mattress or box spring does not make it into a remote out of state landfill or burn facility but instead is responsibly recycled. The passage of this bill will greatly increase the likelihood of successful recycling efforts of not only Park City Green but others who may see a business opportunity to create jobs and provide an environmentally friendly way to deal with a problem in our waste stream.

Let me express Park City Green’s appreciation to the Committee for spending the time necessary to understand this complex environmental and economic issue and we strongly urge you to continue the states leadership in environmental issues and move SB 89 out of committee.

Sincerely,

Bradford Mitchell  
Director of Operations