



*Connecticut Chapter*  
*645 Farmington Ave.*  
*Hartford, Connecticut 06105*  
[www.connecticut.sierraclub.org](http://www.connecticut.sierraclub.org)  
Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Environment Committee  
February 22, 2012

Testimony In Favor of  
SB 89 AA Establishing A Mattress Stewardship Program  
SB 84 AAC Outdoor Wood Furnaces  
SB 88 AAC The Public's Right To Know Of A Sewage Spill  
SB 92 AAC The Disposal And Collection Of Unused Medication

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Sierra Club-Connecticut Chapter. I am also a director of Rivers Alliance and of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

#### **SB 89**

The Sierra Club is an affiliate member of the Connecticut Product Stewardship Council, and actively promotes the principles of Product Stewardship(PS)/Extended Producer Responsibility(EPR). SB 89 is the latest in a series of bills based on PS/EPR principles which bring appropriate and effective strategies to deal with post-consumer solid waste issues. Several years ago, we passed an electronic waste bill, last year a bill for takeback of unused paint.

When the environmental movement started in the 70s, the costs of remediation and cleanup of pollution were borne by society as a whole. There was no incentive for the polluter to minimize the damage, so the costs of pollution were external to the polluter. Over time, we learned to internalize the costs. Make the cost of cleaning up the pollution part of the cost of the product. So products which caused less pollution had a lower cost to the consumer.

The embodiment of this concept is Product Stewardship. Make the manufacturer responsible for cleaning up the mess after the consumer was done with the product. We are asking now to do this with mattresses. Have the manufacturers create a program to recycle the mattresses. If there is a cost to that (there certainly is!), embed that cost in the cost of the product. Make sure that the product is appropriately recycled, rather than disposed in landfills, roadsides, or river banks. 70 PS/EPR laws are now in place in 32 states for 10 products.

Here are a few salient points about the mattress proposal before you:

- It will encourage sales because the purchaser of the new mattress will know his old one will be disposed of properly.
- The manufacturers will have plenty of time to craft and develop the program: at least 1.5 years.
- Mattresses will be deconstructed and the component parts reused, repurposed or used for energy. Some will be rebuilt and given a new life.
- SB 89 is enabling legislation. Each town will decide whether to participate. This is in no way a mandate on the towns. In fact, it will save them the money they now spend on disposal.
- We know how to get this right; there is simply no reason to delay this until next year.
- The program is designed so that government is not running it, the manufacturers are. The fees to be collected and used to finance the system are handled by the manufacturers. None of the money flows through the government.

-The program will help the state achieve its goals found in the Solid Waste Plan.

-Proponents of the bill have spent considerable time trying to work with the manufacturers to craft the bill. There is a documented history of these efforts. There can be no credible claim that manufacturers were left out. The choice to not participate in drafting the bill was theirs.

-If a new mattress sells now for perhaps, \$299, it can be legitimately advertised as "\$299 plus a small recycling fee".

-Mattresses are illegally dumped throughout our world because of the cost of disposing of them. This program will accept used mattresses without charge so illegal dumping will be curtailed.

-There has been a claim that federal legislation is on the way. This is not true. There is no federal program about to emerge. Advances in environmental standards now come almost completely from the states, to be adopted eventually (and hopefully) at the federal level.

## **SB 84**

More than adequate documentation has been assembled showing the impacts of outdoor wood furnace emissions. It is undeniable that particulates from these furnaces carried to downwind neighbors can have a significant health impact, and in some cases render their homes virtually uninhabitable.

While it is true that these furnaces burn renewable wood rather than fossil fuel, the quantity of fuel involved is very small to be an important issue.

The Sierra Club considers these appliances a significant environmental hazard, and recommends that the legislature take vigorous action to minimize their impact. We feel SB 84 is clearly a compromise, one which the committee should have no trouble passing.

## **SB 88**

Ensuring that the public is well informed as to the environment which affects them has been a priority for many decades. Such tools as the federal Toxics Release Inventory and state FOI laws serve as good examples.

Treatment plant operators know of sewage spills and overflows virtually immediately after they occur. Given the ease of posting the information to agency websites, forwarding this information to the public within a very short time after the overflow occurs imposes very little burden on operators and the states agencies involved.

## **SB 92**

Methods of ensuring safe disposal of unused medications have been difficult to craft. The issue is a significant one for the environment, as these meds are well known to contaminate waterways, with implications for the health of aquatic life.

SB 92 addresses the problem in 2 appropriate ways. A potential significant source of these meds, the healthcare community, is specifically prohibited from inappropriate disposal. DEEP is tasked with creating a consumer disposal system in collaboration with the Department of Emergency Management and Public Protection and several other stakeholders. The system devised should provide collection and disposal, while ensuring that the discarded meds will remain in the custody of police or other responsible parties so that they cannot be accessed by others.