



Connecticut Department of  
**ENERGY &  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Public Hearing – February 22, 2012  
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Daniel Esty

**Raised Senate Bill No. 89 - An Act Establishing a Mattress Stewardship Program**

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Raised Senate Bill No. 89 - An Act Establishing a Mattress Stewardship Program. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) welcomes the opportunity to offer the following testimony.

DEEP supports this bill as an effective way to increase the recovery of discarded mattresses and create jobs while lowering municipal expenses. This bill would create a producer responsibility program for the management of discarded mattresses in Connecticut. Under this bill, the mattress industry would take responsibility for managing their product by establishing a mattress stewardship organization which will administer a collection and recycling program. The program would be financed by the manufacturers.

DEEP recognizes producer responsibility programs as an important strategy for managing our state's solid waste going forward. The state's solid waste management plan, last amended in December 2006, identifies product stewardship solutions as an effective tool to help meet our recycling goals. Product stewardship programs acknowledge that consumers, government and manufacturers all play an important role in managing products at the end of their useful life. Placing extended responsibility on producers helps relieve the significant financial burden that currently falls upon municipal governments to manage solid waste. The Department now has one year of experience implementing the electronics recycling program, and is currently working with manufacturers to establish a program to recover unwanted paint. Both of these producer responsibility programs will increase recycling rates, lower costs to municipalities, and provide economic development opportunities.

DEEP is encouraged by the economic development opportunities that have emerged from recent product stewardship programs. As a result of the electronics stewardship law, an electronics recycler recently hired an additional 20 employees in Connecticut. After passing the paint stewardship law last year, the nation's largest paint recycler has been to our state several times and has indicated his intent to open a paint recycling facility in Connecticut. DEEP believes that the quantity of paint expected to be recovered under this program could support an additional paint recycling company. The Department has

met with several mattress recycling businesses; two in particular are establishing their businesses in Connecticut, recognizing producer responsibility as a business opportunity.

In 2011, Connecticut municipalities spent over \$1.2 million managing discarded mattresses. Mattresses are a problematic waste to collect and manage at our existing waste facilities. Cities like Hartford and Waterbury are especially burdened by managing mattresses, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. A producer responsibility approach such as is being put forth by this proposal will save the municipalities money and create more opportunities for residents to recycle their mattresses. Such a program should also result in a reduction in illegally dumped mattresses on our roadways, parks, and woodlands.

Effective product stewardship programs limit the role of government. This bill as proposed does not ask DEEP to manage any funds associated with this program, and we strongly support this concept. The Department cannot expand our obligations without additional resources, and we respectfully ask the legislature to be mindful that this bill not impose additional unfunded responsibilities on the Department.

In summary, DEEP supports Raised Senate Bill No. 89 as an effective way to increase the recovery of discarded mattresses, create jobs, and lower municipal expenses. The Department is willing to work with municipalities and industry to develop a plan for the implementation of this program, and help ensure that the program is run efficiently and with a limited government role.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at (860) 424-3401 or [Robert.LaFrance@CT.gov](mailto:Robert.LaFrance@CT.gov).