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MAYOR

Testimony by Mayor Pedro E. Segarra
City of Hartford
Senate Bill 89
An Act Establishing A Mattress Stewardship Program
February 22, 2012, 11:00AM in Hearing Room 1C

Chairmen Meyer and Roy, Ranking Members Roraback and Chapin, Vice-Chairmen Maynard and Miller and Members of the Environment Committee:

It is a pleasure to appear before you today to offer testimony on Senate Bill 89, AAE A Mattress Stewardship Program. This bill, which I believe represents sound environmental, business and municipal policy, follows the model established for the disposal of electronic and paste waste, both of which were passed in recent years by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor.

Senate Bill 89 is based on the principle of product stewardship, which appropriately shifts responsibility to mattress manufacturers for the full life cost, including the end-of-life management of mattresses. Traditionally, post-consumer disposal costs have been borne by society as a whole. Product Stewardship, also known as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), embeds the costs of disposal within the cost of the product, so that, in effect, the actual user of the product is paying those costs. It does this by making the manufacturer responsible so he will incorporate those costs in the selling price of the product.

The bill assigns manufacturers the responsibility of establishing a stewardship organization, gathering funding from its members and developing a plan for end-of-life management of mattresses. The responsibility completely rests with the manufacturers, who will present plans for review (and potential approval) to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to ensure conformity with the state's solid waste management program. All financing would be the responsibility of the manufacturers—there would be no state involvement in operation of the program. The state would neither collect nor disburse funds.

In Connecticut, 350,000-450,000 mattresses are disposed of annually at a conservative municipal cost of \$1.2 million dollars per year. The tip fees range from \$10 to \$45 per unit and are paid by municipal funds or additional fees to taxpayers at local transfer stations or via special curbside collections. In the City of Hartford alone, where for decades we collected and "disposed" over mattresses from over 70 communities, an estimated 18,000 mattresses are collected annually at a disposal cost of \$180,000. With the financial challenges faced by municipalities today, expenditures at this level divert tax dollars from important priorities: infrastructure restoration, litter elimination, park maintenance and a host of more meaningful community services.

The disposal fees encourage illegal dumping, which has become chronic across the state. Mattresses are ubiquitous in the urban landscape: illegally dumped curbside, in vacant lots, on housing authority properties and in parks. Illegal dumping of mattresses is not reserved just for cities; these can be found in suburban locations near commercial dumpsters or alongside rural roads and occasionally in rivers and lakes. Mattresses end up damaging incineration equipment at waste-to-energy plants where they offer minimal BTU value. Waste-to-energy plants

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have set fees at levels intended to discourage municipal deliveries. Long-distance transport to out-of-state landfills is expensive, puts more trucks on our crowded roads, and creates air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The handling of mattresses in Connecticut seems a genuine squandering of resources and is wholly unnecessary. Burning or burying mattresses wastes an opportunity for material component reclamation, reuse and recycling. Uncontaminated mattress components like metal, untreated wood frames, cotton, foam, and other materials have resale value as commodities. Some mattresses can actually be appropriately re-covered and sold as re-furbished.

I believe the dialogue Connecticut municipalities have held over the last three years regarding mattress disposal costs has served as an incentive for attracting three green businesses ready to launch into mattress reuse and recycling this Spring. Bridgeport has established a reuse/recycling non-profit corporation, Park City Green, an international mattress recycler from Canada, which will soon be signing a lease for an 18,000 square foot commercial facility in the Hartford area and a company named Connecticut Mattress Recyclers has a site in Hartford. The passage of this legislation will mean the creation and expansion of a new business and the creation of stable jobs.

For approximately three years, the City of Hartford has dedicated resources to the study of mattress disposal in Hartford and statewide. Working with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and other cities, regional entities and recycling authorities, the problem of mattress disposal system and associated costs has been defined, and a good solution crafted.

I am proud to have the City of Hartford lead this effort; an effort that will serve to benefit all municipalities who face the costs—small or large – associated with mattress disposal. This initiative is buttressed by a number of organizations who have and will speak out in support of this legislation, and they include: the DEEP, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, CT Product Stewardship Council, CT League of Women Voters, Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority, Central CT Solid Waste Authority, Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority, Covanta Energy, Wheelabrator, the Sierra Club, and the Product Stewardship Institute.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I urge the committee's favorable consideration of Senate Bill No. 89.