

TESTIMONY of STATE REPRESENTATIVE PATRICIA WIDLITZ

IN SUPPORT OF SB 89

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MATTRESS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Patricia Widlitz and I have the honor of representing the 98th District which includes sections of Guilford and Branford. Thank you for the opportunity of testifying before you today in support of SB 89, AA Establishing A Mattress Stewardship Program.

As many of you may recall, I have been a strong advocate of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation which holds producers responsible for the cost of recycling or disposing of their products at their end-of-life use. CT has already passed producer responsibility legislation for electronics and most recently, architectural paint and coatings. SB 89 extends that responsibility to the producers of mattresses.

This legislative proposal is structured similarly to PA 11-24 by requiring producers of mattresses sold in Connecticut to establish a non-profit organization with a fee structure that covers the cost of collection, transport, and recycling or disposal of their products. The "plan" that the organization designs will require approval by the Commissioner of DEEP and will be audited on a regular basis to ensure that the fee does not exceed the cost of implementing the plan.

The benefits of this legislation are significant:

- *Municipalities will save money. DEP surveyed municipalities and estimates annual costs of \$1.2 million for municipal mattress disposal. The weight of discarded mattresses accounts for a large percentage of the cost of tipping fees. The cost is covered by local taxes and/or fees.

- *Decrease unsightly "dumping" of discarded mattresses.

- *Recycling rates will increase, consistent with the state solid waste management plan.

- * Two recycling plants are currently being permitted (Bridgeport & Bloomfield). Jobs will be created and sustained by providing a steady stock of material for recycling.

It is likely that there will be resistance from some sectors of the industry who will argue that a national policy is preferable. We heard the same argument from the electronics industry, but the national policy never came to fruition. Had we waited our landfills would still be filling up with toxic waste. Fortunately, CT and many other states took the initiative and led the way.