

## **Mattress Recycling: Making A Contribution To Connecticut's Economic Growth**

In March, 2013 legislators will be considering mattress stewardship legislation that will offer an independent, non-governmental program for convenient management of mattresses, with the costs of recycling responsibly included in the purchase price of new mattresses.

To those who may think mattress recycling legislation is inconsequential; I ask, can we squander any opportunity to open doors for new businesses and create more jobs? While HB 6437, An Act Concerning A Mattress Stewardship Program, will not save Connecticut's economy by itself, it will be a meaningful contribution to that end.

Connecticut legislators face enormous pressure from constituents who want them to focus on economic recovery and to find sweeping and speedy solutions to Connecticut's weakened economy. It is prudent that legislators make the economy a priority. Prosperous residents mean a prosperous state.

Rebuilding Connecticut's economy requires imagination and the knitting together of a diversified business sector that includes recycling businesses. Why not start expanding business opportunities with the products we discard? They are plentiful and within our reach.

Green business development should be part of the mix for economic recovery. Recycling discarded products creates ten (10) jobs for every one (1) job associated with incinerating waste.

In fact, on February 28, 2013, Governor Malloy, DEEP Commissioner Esty and DECD Commissioner Smith hosted a legislative day at the State Capitol called "Recycling Means Jobs." Various Connecticut recycling businesses described a circular economy where discarded materials are respected as the commodities they are, recaptured for recycling and used to make new commercial products, often right here in Connecticut.

From Albert Brothers Scrap Metal recyclers of Waterbury, a company started in 1895, to Recyc-Mattress of Bloomfield, a company established in 2012, recycling industry leaders spoke about their business success and the relationship to legislative policies in Connecticut. These recycling businesses pay taxes to local communities and the State of Connecticut and create hundreds of sustainable jobs that pay living wages.

Various legislators spoke in favor of promoting environmental policies that foster green business creation and expansion. Commissioner Esty expounded on the critical nexus that exists among the three "E"s ---environment, energy and economic growth and how it can alter Connecticut's future economy. Deputy Commissioner McCleary noted that we have an opportunity to stimulate economic development through reuse and recycling by unlocking the untapped value of materials still found in our waste stream. Finally, Governor Malloy announced the creation of a Recycling Markets Development Council to bring together industry leaders and entrepreneurs ready to collaborate on making recycling work.

HB 6437 is the outcome of a collaborative process of both mattress manufacturers and stewardship proponents. Legislators can be assured that a vote for the mattress bill continues movement toward re-energizing our economy.

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