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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Environment Committee
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Testimony In Favor of
SB 16 AA Requiring Labeling of Food Packaging That Contains Bisphenol-a

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

The Sierra Club believes that the knowing and intentional introduction of toxic substances into our environment is very much an environmental issue.

Bisphenol-A (BPA) has been used as a component of plastic containers. It is an endocrine disrupter that scientific/medical research has linked with a variety of disorders, including cancers, reproductive disorders, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, insulin-resistance, diabetes and obesity. Human exposure comes from the leachate of BPA from the plastic into the contents of the containers.

While we are confident BPA will eventually be banned for any application which can cause human exposure, we are simply asking here for disclosure of information directly to the consumer. Use mandatory labeling to allow a consumer the choice of whether to take the risks of exposure. Labeling must be mandatory so that a consumer will know with confidence whether a container offered for sale contains the chemical or not. A voluntary system would not work.

As this requirement would involve only a label on the packaging, the cost to the manufacturer would be somewhere between negligible and minimal.

The argument is frequently made that a federal uniform requirement would be more appropriate. We agree that it would be. However, recent history has proven almost without exception that the gridlock in Washington has made any such expectation unrealistic. Across the country, protections such as this are now being considered at the state level, with a view to a federal standard sometime in the unpredictable future.

The Sierra Club strongly endorses SB 16.