



Connecticut Chapter
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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Environment Committee
March 11, 2015

Testimony In Support of
HB5733 AA Requiring The State Treasurer To Divest Funds From Fossil Fuel Companies
HB6957 AA Establishing A Household Battery Recycling Stewardship Program

In partial support of and partial opposition to
SB 366 AA Extending The Ban On The Use Of Lawn Care Pesticides To Schools That House
Grades Nine Through Twelve And To State Facilities
SB 1063 AAC The Application Of Pesticides On School Grounds And Certain Public Spaces,
Authorizing The Use Of Certain Microbials And Reestablishing The Pesticide Advisory Council

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.

5733

Divestment is an important policy tool which may be instrumental in the effort to switch
from fossil fuels to a more sustainable energy model based on renewable energy. If we are
successful, we soon will be able to keep fossil fuels in the ground and reduce the projected
damage from climate change they clearly present.

Science and history tell us that we must move away from burning of fossil fuels, and as
quickly as possible, if we are to keep the planet habitable for generations to come. The science on
this is settled, and unambiguous.

We hear financial firms advising that fossil fuel companies are not strong investments for
the future. On the other hand, solar and other renewables are growing rapidly, so are good
investments for the future.

The state of Connecticut has a valuable opportunity today to make a strong statement of
our interest in the future habitability of the planet, and what we must do to ensure it. Taking
leadership on this, and making such a strong statement, is in everyone's interest, and would bring
great credit to the state. We call on the legislature to take such action. This year.

We know the state Treasurer at this point wishes a policy of engagement, rather than
divestment, with the fossil fuel companies. We are well aware of her consistent efforts over the

years to use the opportunity with state investments to address Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues, while simultaneously exercising her fiduciary responsibilities to maximize the value of the funds in her care. We have great respect for her values and judgment. We do not believe at this time that she would support a bill simply mandating divestment, and we honor her preference.

We are now actively working with the state Treasurer's office as well as advocates expert in the issue to find substitute language which puts Connecticut's concern with the implications of fossil fuels on record; which clearly expresses our interest in the activity of fossil fuel companies; which sends the message that fossil fuel companies must act quickly find a new business model; and which gives the Treasurer the latitude she desires to address the leverage we have with investment of state funds. Legislation requiring state divestment may be desirable in the future, but perhaps we're not there yet.

6957

Effective strategies for dealing with solid waste is an important part of our environmental agenda. The Sierra Club is a member of the CT Product Stewardship Council.

Ever seen the movie Wall-E? If so, you understand why. In this 2008 delightful Pixar animated movie, accumulated trash has driven humans off the planet.

What is EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility)?

EPR is a program for reclaiming and appropriately disposing of large quantities of consumer goods at the end of their useful life. Manufacturers set up a program to acquire the discards from the users and send them for recycling or reuse. A few important points about EPR:

- state government requires a program be established by the manufacturers
- state government approves and monitors it, but does not run it, and has no day to day involvement
- the program is owned by and run by the manufacturers
- cost of the program is paid for by a small surcharge at the time of retail sale. Those using the products and benefitting from them thus pay for their end-of-life disposal. In economic terms, the cost of the pollution is embedded ("internalized") in its original retail cost, rather than "externalized", imposed on society as a whole.
- the state has zero involvement with the monetary side; that rests entirely with the program the manufacturers have established

Giving responsibility to the manufacturers has another benefit. It gives them an economic incentive to design their products for efficient reprocessing at end-of-life.

As you may know, we have EPR systems in place for electronics, paint, and mattresses. In 2015, we hope to add both tires and small batteries. HB 6957 provides for an EPR program for batteries, using the expertise we have developed at DEEP to construct it. We advise a vote in favor.

366 and 1063

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

Pesticides were created specifically to kill living things. We must not lose sight of this. While they may be useful in control of unwanted living things (“pests”), they also have effects on humans. That has been well established. And the younger you are, the more pronounced can be the effect on your health.

So, if we are to limit our exposure to these toxins, we start with children. We have restrictions in place for the grounds of K-8 schools. Now we should extend that ban to 9-12 schools. We must extend it to other places where kids tend to show up: parks and playgrounds..

We know there are alternative “organic” methods for turf care. They are effective, but may take 1-2 years to work. Given a commitment to them, we can have playing fields which are both good homes for sports and non-toxic to the children who use them.

We are, unofficially, “the land of steady habits:” Perhaps nothing illustrates this more vividly than the reluctance we show to move away from these toxic exposures. In Europe, the “precautionary principle” prevails. It says that, once we have accumulated evidence that something is damaging, it is time to move away from it. No need for legal standards beyond any standard of doubt, just sufficient accumulated evidence to be confident we have a problem. We are there with toxic pesticides. It is time to move on.

We see a revived Pesticide Advisory Council as nothing more than an opportunity for delay. We strongly advise against this proposal.