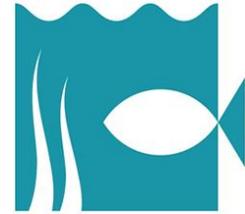




**Connecticut Fund
for the Environment**



Save the Sound®
A program of
Connecticut Fund for the Environment

Connecticut Fund for the Environment (“CFE”) is a non-profit environmental organization with over 5,500 members statewide. The mission of CFE, and its bi-state program Save the Sound, is to protect and improve the land, air and water of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. We use legal and scientific expertise and bring people together to achieve results that benefit our environment for current and future generations.

**Testimony of Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound
Before the Environment Committee
March 11, 2015**

Dear Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and members of the Environment Committee: Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state program Save the Sound submits this testimony in strong support of

- **H.B. 5286, An Act Prohibiting the Import and Sale of Cosmetics that Contain Microbeads,**
- **S.B. 1061, An Act Concerning the Fiscal Sustainability of State Parks,**
- **H.B. 5733, An Act Requiring the State Treasurer to Divest Funds From Fossil Fuel Companies**

and in conditional support of

- **H.B. 6957, An Act Establishing a Household Battery Recycling Stewardship Program.**

CFE/Save the Sound echoes the support of Citizens Campaign for the Environment regarding **H.B. 5286: An Act Prohibiting the Import and Sale of Cosmetics that Contain Microbeads.**

- Found in hundreds of personal care products such as facial scrubs, the tiny plastic particles known as microbeads enter our environment once they wash down the drain, either through sewage overflows that bypass sewage treatment plants, or by flowing through treatment plants that are typically unequipped to filter them out. Once in the water, they pose a direct threat to aquatic wildlife and increase the amount of plastic in waterbodies including Long Island Sound.
- Microbeads act like sponges in the water, accumulating toxins. Fish and aquatic wildlife sometimes eat the microbeads, causing the chemicals absorbed by the microbeads to then accumulate in the animals’ bodies. These chemicals are stored in the fatty tissues of the organisms and passed up the food chain, including to humans.
- Several major manufacturers, including Unilever and Proctor & Gamble, have already begun to eliminate plastic microbeads from their products, in recognition of their environmental harm. Non-polluting alternatives, including pumice and salt scrubs, are widely available and do not have the same adverse environmental impacts as plastic microbeads.

CFE/Save the Sound strongly supports the prohibition of plastic microbeads in all non-prescription cosmetic and personal care products offered for sale or import in Connecticut.

CFE/Save the Sound echoes the supportive comments of Eileen Grant, of the Friends of Connecticut State Parks Board of Directors, regarding **Raised S.B. 1061: An Act Concerning the Fiscal Sustainability of State Parks.**

- Establishing a non-lapsing State Parks Sustainability Account will help realize a meaningful increased and protected revenue source for our state parks. It is critical, however, that this account is not considered a replacement for support received from the General Fund. In addition, the act would create a system that protects public contributions which would ensure funds are used only for their intended purpose; this will benefit the environment and build public trust.
- An opt-out \$5 donation to parks included in future car registrations will enable the public to respond generously and act on their love of our park system. A similar program in Washington state has received a 60 percent participation rate; attaining a similar rate in Connecticut would bring an additional \$2.7 million to state parks annually. Ensuring that funds are not diverted from state parks would help reach this strong participation.
- The ability to track the Sustainability Account online and in an accompanying quarterly report will help allay citizen fears about money being used elsewhere. Strong accountability is required.

CFE/Save the Sound strongly supports the creation of a non-lapsing State Parks Sustainability Account to increase funding for our state parks and invest in their future.

CFE/Save the Sound supports the goals of **H.B. 5733, An Act Requiring the State Treasurer to Divest Funds From Fossil Fuel Companies.** The purpose of this Act is to “not further invest in such [fossil fuel] companies in order to discourage the extraction of fossil fuels and avoid a significant increase in global warming.”

- Connecticut is already facing major impacts from climate change, including sea level rise along the coast of Long Island Sound. Removing the state’s money from holdings in the fossil fuel industry, as has been done by institutions such as the Rockefeller Foundation and cities around the world, would align the state’s financial interests with its interest in mitigating climate change impacts.
- The multi-year schedule laid out in this Act would ease any strain on the state’s financial resources and will make an important statement about Connecticut’s commitment to a cleaner energy future.
- Connecticut has demonstrated its ability to fiscally innovate on behalf of the environment time and time again, most recently through its first-in-the-nation Green Bank. It can demonstrate this national leadership once more, not only by removing our money from industries and projects that cause damage to our ecological and economic systems, but also by investing our money in the growing industries that are making the right choices for our future, including fuel cells right here at home. H.B. 5733, strengthened to include new avenues of clean energy investment to replace divested funds, will help Connecticut, and our natural resources, for years to come.

CFE/Save the Sound echoes the conditional support of Citizens Campaign for the Environment regarding **Raised H.B. 6957: An Act Establishing a Household Battery Recycling Stewardship Program.**

- Due to the high toxicity of hazardous materials in household and industrial batteries, including heavy metals like mercury, manganese, and cadmium that pose a risk to humans and wildlife and can persist in the environment for a long time, we agree that

Connecticut must institute a strong battery recycling program for primary and secondary batteries.

- Model language from the battery industry includes all “household” type batteries, regardless of where they are used. The state should adopt this model, rather than explicitly excluding batteries or products purchased primarily for industrial or business use, as is done in section 1(7). Business-to-business and institutional batteries should not be excluded.
- The requirement in section 2(6) of a “a detailed method of management for discarded primary batteries that ensures that the components of primary batteries collected from consumers, *to the extent economically and technically feasible*, are recycled,” defeats the purpose of passing legislation to set up a comprehensive battery recycling program. A strong battery stewardship program must use a recycling performance standard to ensure the highest and best possible use of recycled materials over time. We concur with CCE that DEEP should develop a “recycling efficiency rate,” revised every two years, to determine the best available technology and clearly delineate percentages of recycled batteries to return to market as products.
- Section 13 says that the DEEP Commissioner *may* adopt regulations to implement the provisions of sections 2 to 15 of this Act. CFE/Save the Sound supports amending this section to read “the Commissioner *shall* adopt regulations...”

CFE/Save the Sound strongly supports the concept of this legislation, but conditionally supports the specific language of the current version. We believe that the current language requires significant strengthening, as partially outlined above, to achieve a strong and meaningful battery recycling program in the state.

Thus, we support these bills for the aforementioned reasons. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Leah Lopez Schmalz
Program Director
203.787.0646 ext. 121
lschmalz@savethesound.org

Sarah Ganong
Media Coordinator
203.787.0646 ext. 128
sganong@ctenvironment.org