

## TESTIMONY OF CONNECTICUT COALITION OF PROPERTY OWNERS

### RE: HB 6759 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LANDLORDS AND TENANTS REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF BED BUG INFESTATIONS.

Tuesday February 17, 2015 1pm room 2D, Legislative office building.

Good afternoon. My name is John Souza and I'm the President of the CT Coalition of Property Owners and a full time landlord. The Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO) is the largest landlord property owner association in Connecticut. CCOPO has affiliate chapters in Bridgeport, Stamford and Windham and West Hartford. Collectively CCOPO members own approximately 10,000 rental units throughout Connecticut.

CCOPO Opposes section 1 paragraph (b) (1 )as written. Landlords don't need to hire a qualified inspector at a cost of \$75-\$120 to confirm that there is an infestation of bed bugs for two reasons, 1) often tenants just have a feeling they have bed bugs because they have a bump on their arm or they feel itchy and assume it must be bed bugs, I do the visual inspection with them to alleviate their mind, at no cost to anyone and a fifteen minute visual inspection of bedding, furniture and surroundings can verify if there is a problem once anyone knows what to look for. 2) if an infestation is found we can proceed directly with a treatment plan. If the tenants do what is required for preparation and maintenance, the infestation can be treated by the landlord utilizing multiple resources from the internet. If the landlord prefers he can hire a licensed professional to treat the infestation, but the tenants must perform the preparation and continue the maintenance for any treatments to be effective.

If a professional is required to treat and/ or verify that the treatment is successful, the "five day " dead line is too restrictive, I would change it to "schedule an appointment " with said professional within the 5 days. Landlords can't control scheduling of other companies.

Bed bug awareness has increased significantly in the last few years. Landlords have learned that if an infestation is left unchecked it can spread to other units and become an extreme nuisance to the entire building, and there are tremendous resources to help deal with any infestation online, or from a pest professional. Tenants are realizing that they too have a role in controlling and eliminating bed bugs. When tenants and landlords work together cooperatively the problem can be solved.

This completes my testimony. Thank you for your consideration.