

CGA Environment Committee

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2015

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF:

S.B. NO. 349 AN ACT CONCERNING SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS AND THE USE OF REUSABLE BAGS.

Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and Members of the Environment Committee:

I strongly support the proposal to ban the distribution of single-use plastic shopping bags in favor of reusable shopping bags. The US disposes 50 billion single use plastic shopping bags a year. By EPA estimates, less than 12% of these bags used in the US are recycled.

Single-use plastic bags present an insidious threat to our environment on multiple levels. Because they are extremely light weight, they often escape into the environment and end up polluting our waterways, clogging sewers, endangering marine life and causing unsightly litter. Bags in trees, bushes and waterways are not only a blight to our State, but they also present a real danger to wildlife, our own health and the health of our children. Connecticut being a coastal state, much of this plastic litter ends up in Long Island Sound where it photo-degrades, breaking down into tiny toxic bits that are mistaken for food by the fish that we then eat. This is a situation which has escalated to a dangerous level in our oceans around the world.

Hundreds of cities, towns and countries around the world have taken the step of simply advocating — and legislating — the consumption of fewer single use plastic shopping bags, and the use of reusable ones. In October 2014, the State of California enacted legislation, Senate Bill 270, to ban single-use plastic shopping bags. It is time now for the State of Connecticut to do the same.

I strongly urge you to support this bill. It is estimated that each family will save about 1000 bags per year by adopting the change, collectively having an enormous and lasting impact. We want to be proud of Connecticut as a responsible leader and steward of our planet. Please do the right thing and ban further distribution of single use plastic shopping bags in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Dina Brewster

136 Lounsbury Road,
Ridgefield, CT 06877