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Testimony in Support of SB 349

An Act Concerning Single-Use Carryout Plastic and Paper Bags and the Use of Reusable Bags

Environment Committee

February 4, 2015

Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban, Senator Moore, Representative Arconti and members of the Environment Committee.

I strongly support the committee's efforts to reduce the use of plastic and paper bags and shift Connecticut to a reusable bag state. It is a sensible and constructive initiative with direct positive impact on the environment.

As a former member of Westport's Representative Town Meeting (RTM), I was proud to play a role in making our town the first in the state to institute a plastic bag ban. It was controversial initially, and I confess I forgot to grab my reusable bag quite frequently in the first few months, but it's amazing how well the townspeople adapted and now are quite comfortable toting reusable bags.

You will hear testimony today from a few from my Westport cohort, including insights from the RTM members responsible for introducing the initiative in our town. Equally importantly, they will share with you their experiences in consulting with other communities across the state and beyond, which will give you a sense of how this movement is gaining momentum.

If any of you have seen the movie, "Garbage," hosted by the actor Jeremy Irons, you understand how plastic bags pose a huge threat to our environment, particularly for aquatic life. If you haven't seen the movie, I encourage you to do so. This discussion by the Environment Committee is far from symbolic; we can make a real difference if we're willing to engineer the transition to a reusable bag culture.

Again, I commend your efforts going forward, offer my assistance in any way I can, and look forward to the debate.

Thank you.

- Representative Jonathan Steinberg, 136th District