

Testimony S.B. No. 79, An Act Clarifying provisions of the General Statutes regarding the use of properly installed and constructed barrier systems for certain planting.

Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, and members of the Environment Committee. My name is Holly Johnson, and I am here today on behalf of Summer Hill Nursery in Madison, Connecticut.

At Summer Hill Nursery we sell many forms of bamboo, including several varieties of Phyllostachys. Many of our customers, landscapers in particular, have found that Phyllostachys is sometimes the right plant for a difficult site. It is evergreen, deer resistant, has almost no pest problems and can be contained in a narrow space when a proper barrier system is used.

There are many examples of well contained plantings in locations where a fence might be too short, deer pressure too great, and the space too narrow. One customer used bamboo in above ground containers at a restaurant to screen the parking lot adjacent to the outdoor dining area. Another planted it as a backdrop to an outdoor hot tub in a side yard. It stays contained within the recommended 60 mil polyethylene barrier that was installed underground at the time of planting. These types of plantings would be illegal if the language of this bill were to change, yet they are not problem plantings.

It is unfortunate that proper planting practices have not always been used in the past. Just as it is unfortunate when my neighbor's dog digs holes in my yard, eats my son's toys and scares him when bounding out of nowhere, but I don't expect legislation to be passed that all dogs be kept indoors at all time. I expect reasonable laws to be observed just as I do regarding bamboo. I believe this law acts in its best interest when a barrier is required for plantings within 40' of the property line. Therefore, please do not vote to change the current law from how it is written at this time. If change is necessary we should bring together those with experience to produce a well written law that helps protect homeowners from both irresponsible neighbors planting bamboo incorrectly and irate homeowners from regulating bamboo into obsolescence.