

**Testimony
for the
Environment Committee
of the
Connecticut Legislature
on
Senate Bill No. 226**

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Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

The CT Chapter of National Waste and Recycling Association (hereafter the chapter) represents an industry that is dedicated to the environmentally protective, sustainable and economically efficient management of recoverable and recyclable materials, discards and wastes.

We have a vision of a society that reduces waste, recycles more and recovers value from discards to the maximum extent practicable and properly disposes the wastes that remain. We approach our job as reality-checkers who must negotiate, adapt to, and address the day-to-day and evolving conditions associated with collecting and handling recyclables, recoverable materials, discards and wastes. We are in a unique position to offer well informed perspectives on the realities of how these materials are managed today, and how they can be better managed tomorrow.

We are grateful for this opportunity to provide these comments to the CT Environment Committee on legislation about single use carryout bags

S.B. No. 226 – An Act Concerning Single Use Carryout Bags

The chapter supports this legislation that seeks to address the issue of single use carryout bags, especially its provision that calls for the creation of plastic bag and plastic film recycling programs.

In the past we have chosen not to venture into the single use carryout out bag policy and legislative debate. It has been before the legislature for some time, in various iterations; and it has proven to be a generally a very difficult issue with a lot difficult sub-issues and concerns.

Our most recent thinking to support this legislation – now - involves the call in it for the creation of plastic bag and plastic film recycling programs. We know that plastic bags and plastic films today are recyclable, and will only become more recyclable with the other provisions in this legislation. We also know there are many successful recycling programs for these items today all over the country and many already here in CT. The re-use and recycling option, we know, is generally more favorably looked upon than a disposal option.

In addition, as the industry that handles the vast majority of CTs other consumer and commercially generated recyclables and runs the environmental facilities that processes them for marketing and eventual re-use and recycling, we know getting these plastic bags and film out of

our facilities will produce additional benefits for the environment and our customers – the citizens, communities and businesses of CT.

The issue with plastic bags and film at our recycling facilities is they foul our equipment, mostly our material screens as well as the belts and gears that power the machines at our recycling centers. Plastic bags and film at our facilities cause us to suffer the loss of extended downtime and worker expense – routinely – as we have to go about constantly cleaning and removing these items from our systems. When they pass through our systems – they become ropelike entangled – in our equipment -- during every shift we operate. Plastic bags and film to our plants are like string or a carpet thread to a vacuum cleaner that causes it to jam and stop working as the string wraps around the spinning brush growing tighter and stronger and eventually causing the brushes to stop spinning altogether. Getting plastic bags and film out of our recycling bins and into plastic bag and film industry supported retail based recycling programs will provide us some relief, while improving the re-use and recycling of these items and materials as well.

Thank-you for your attention to our comments and views. We stand ready to work with the sponsors, committee, DEEP officials and others, and with our customers to create the best recycling and waste management programs for CT as possible.

The CT chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association represents the private taxpaying waste and recycling haulers and companies that work in CT every day to responsibly manage the after useful life discards, materials, recyclables and wastes generated by its citizens, communities and businesses. We believe in strong, sustainable environmentally responsible programs that are run with the efficiency and expertise that comes from a competitive and robust private marketplace that provides and innovates these services routinely.