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**Testimony on RB 226 and RB 232  
Concerning Batteries and Plastic Bags  
Friday, March 4, 2016**

Sen. Kennedy, Rep. Albis, Sen. Chapin, Rep. Shaban and Members of the Environment Committee:

*My name is Winston Averill and I have worked in the field of Recycling and Solid Waste Management in Connecticut since 1989, and in Minnesota prior to that time. I have been active with the Connecticut Recycler's Coalition for many years and more recently with the Connecticut Product Stewardship Council. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to these raised bills, and wish to thank the Environment Committee for this opportunity. I am submitting testimony on the following Raised Bills:*

- **Raised Bill 226, “An Act Concerning Single-Use Carryout Bags”**
- **Raised Bill 232, “An Act Concerning the Recycling of Consumer Household Batteries”**

**Raised Bill 226: An Act Concerning Single-Use Carryout Bags**

Unfortunately RB 226 fails to address many of the adverse factors associated with plastic bags:

- 1/ The lack of convenient recycling options.
- 2/ Their impact as a constituent of litter (especially in marine environments).
- 3/ The impact of plastic bags at Connecticut's recycling facilities (MRFs), where they wrap around processing equipment, causing delays and increased maintenance.

While increasing recycled content is a great idea, bags still must be managed at the end of their usable life – and for single use bags that comes quickly. Currently households must bring plastic bags back to those stores that accept them for recycling – which tend to be a few larger grocery stores, if in fact they participate. In addition, RB 226 seeks to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the grocery and retail industries. It important to note that many these same entities simply ignore Connecticut's existing law requiring the availability of paper bags to customers. Walmart, Home Depot, many small and large retailers only offer single use plastic bags at point of sale. Paper bags are not available.

I believe that a better approach would be the more inclusive discussion of broader product stewardship for packaging materials overall, including single-use plastic bags.

**Raised Bill 232: An Act Concerning the Recycling of Consumer Household Batteries**

The Connecticut Product Stewardship Council (CTPSC), Battery Industry, Product Stewardship Institute, and many other stakeholders nationwide have been collaborating on Battery Stewardship Legislation for several years. This work is broadly modeled on our successful product stewardship legislation for other materials; Connecticut has three (3) stewardship laws for: Electronics, Paint, and Mattresses.

Recently Vermont passed a stewardship bill for *Alkaline Batteries* (Act 139), and Maine has proposed LD 1578, a battery stewardship bill supported by the Battery Industry, and one that reflects language the CTPSC could support for Connecticut.

Every material or product affected through product stewardship presents its own unique set of management issues and necessary strategies. Clearly collecting, storing and processing cans of paint differs markedly from the collection and processing of post-consumer mattresses. Batteries similarly provide their own challenges and opportunities. Currently a collection system exists for the acceptance and recycling of *Rechargeable Batteries* through “Call to Recycle”, an industry managed effort commenced in the mid-1990s. Although limited in success as measured by overall capture rate and beset by “free rider” problems, the Call to Recycle program illustrates the structural means through which post-consumer batteries should be targeted and captured.

Bill 232 seeks to add batteries, to Connecticut’s designated recyclables resulting in their inclusion into the stream of “traditional” recycling materials (bottles, cans, paper). The processors (MRFs) of Connecticut’s single stream recyclables (all curbside recyclable materials grouped for collection) do not have the ability to separate and segregated household batteries. Thus captured, they would simply end up as a processing residual and be discarded, at the expense of Connecticut’s cities and towns.

I urge the Committee to instead support the CTPSC, the battery industry and other stake holders to create a pragmatic, workable product stewardship bill for post-consumer batteries.

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