



Connecticut Chapter
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Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Environment Committee
March 5, 2016
Testimony in Opposition to
SB 00226 AAC Single-use Carryout Bags
SB00232 AAC The Recycling of Consumer Household Batteries
SB00233 AAC A Reduction of Consumer-based Packaging Materials

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

The Sierra Club has been a member of the CT Product Stewardship Council for several years. Solid waste disposal is an important issue for our environmental portfolio. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) model is the best possible framework to manage post use material collection and processing, and to allocate costs appropriately by including the cost of such processing in the upfront cost of the product. Such costs are then paid, not by society, but by the users of the product. We have been pleased to support EPR solutions in the past for mattresses and paint, and look forward to addressing the significant challenge of tires.

The three bills discussed here encompass important solid waste considerations, and we are pleased they are raised for discussion. However, the solutions offered are not adequate. In addition to our comments here, we strongly endorse the testimony filed by Cheryl Reedy on behalf of the CT PSC. We respect her experience and expertise, and greatly appreciate her appearance on behalf of the Council.

Even better, develop a model product stewardship framework for the state. Consider adopting the product stewardship framework from Maine and other states.

SB 226 AAC Single-use Carryout Bags

The 3 fundamentals of consumer products are reduce, reuse, recycle, in that order. So we must provide the consumer an incentive to reduce the demand for single use bags at checkout. Simply reducing the mass of a bag does not address the problem. As we said a few years ago, we strongly favor a charge of \$0.10 per bag. That provides the economic incentive to the consumer to use multi-use bags. Use the income for some worthy purpose. As the stores currently provide the bags at their cost, this reduction will, by itself, benefit them. However, the stores will be responsible for forwarding the income to the state, so perhaps give them 0.01 per bag. Then, perhaps a year or two later, re-visit then issue and consider simply banning single-use bags. Recycling as a solution here is highly problematic as it requires collection of the bags, no easy task.

SB 232 AAC The Recycling of Consumer Household Batteries

Negotiations have been in progress for some time to establish an EPR system for these batteries. The language of SB 232 seems to ignore the progress made in those negotiations. We strongly recommend establishing a robust EPR program, not simply attempting a recycling effort, especially as the industry is fully engaged in the negotiations. Make sure the cost of the post-consumer processing is embedded in the purchase price. Do not in any way ask the towns to pay for this.

SB 233 AAC A Reduction of Consumer-based Packaging Materials

There is little in this bill to effectively address the issue. We suggest a review of the just announced program for Rhode Island as described here:

<http://upstreampolicy.org/introducing-upstreams-new-epr-for-packaging-legislation/>