For the Environment Committee

Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Lower River Steward

February 8, 2017

The Connecticut River Watershed Council is the principal nonprofit environmental advocate for protection, restoration, and sustainable use of the Connecticut River and its watershed.

In SUPPORT of Raised Bill 6352 – An Act Establishing a Tire Stewardship Program

The way Connecticut currently treats scrap tires is a recipe for illegal dumping and this will continue until disposal of tires is free and easy. Government and industry are not working to create safe and innovative ways to reuse tires in paving, construction, and other uses. This means that scrap tires are a cost to consumers and municipalities and have less and less value to haulers and processors, which means they are piling up and ending up in our rivers. Each year during our Source to Sea Cleanup, an annual river cleanup of the entire Connecticut River watershed, volunteers pull out an average of 700 tires each year from the Connecticut River and its tributaries. CRWC would love to get out of the business of pulling tires out of rivers. We have witnessed the success of the Mattress and Paint Stewardship Programs and are confident that a Tire Stewardship Program will not only solve the issue of illegal dumping of tires, but also bring economic development to the state by encouraging scrap tire processors and businesses that use scrap tire in innovative and beneficial ways to establish here in Connecticut.

A Tire Stewardship Program as described in this bill will not burden already resource strapped state agencies and any increase in cost to the consumers will be minimal considering that tires are purchased infrequently by the average person. The report “Long Term Management Options for Scrap Tire in Connecticut” produced by DEEP last year compares the cost and benefits of Market Based, State and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs. The comparison shows that EPR programs are only slightly more expensive at $3.05-$3.58 per tire where Market-based programs run about $2.25 per tire. The life expectancy of a passenger tire is 50,000 miles. The average person drives approximately 12,000 miles per year. To be conservative, we’ll assume that the average person replaces their tires every three years. Even at the higher estimate of $3.58 per tire, the cost to the consumer would be about $4.75 a year ($3.58*4/3). That is $2.00 less than most value meals at McDonalds.

The benefits far outweigh the costs. EPR outperforms State and Market-based programs in impact on illegal dumping, private sector job creation, increase in recycling rates, and environmental benefits. The increase in recycling rates for tires will go far in helping DEEP meet its solid waste reduction goals.
Connecticut has never had a program to managing scrap tire. It needs one NOW. Please vote in favor of this bill.

**In OPPOSITION of SB 505 – An Act Concerning the Paint Stewardship Program**

CRWC opposes any alteration to the current Paint Stewardship Program. Paint cans are another “usual suspect” found during our Source to Sea Cleanup. Since the Paint Care Program has been in effect, the free and easy disposal of paint cans and unused paint has reduced the amount of paint cans reported by volunteers here in Connecticut. And as a homeowner renovating a c.1860 farmhouse, I can attest to ease and convenience of this program to the consumer. Please leave this program in place, as is, and allow this successful program to thrive.