

Dear Environment Committee member,

I am the Environmental Education Committee chair for the Faulkner's Island Light Brigade, and a co-founder of seaofnoplastic.org , an education initiative that began 8 years ago as a grant-funded school project in Guilford, CT, which involves interdisciplinary projects using art and science to communicate the harmful impacts of plastic pollution in marine environments and the inland watershed. It is critical to support legislation such as these bills that work to address the profound, long-term damage to ecosystems, wildlife, and humans created by plastic pollution in its various forms.

#### In SUPPORT of SB 426—AAC ABANDONED FISHING GEAR IN LONG ISLAND SOUND

A study conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension between 2014-2016 estimated there are more than 500,000 lobster traps at the bottom of Long Island Sound. It is estimated 90% of those traps are in poor condition but still catching, but catching what? Only 24% of the traps pulled from the bottom had lobsters in them, some of which were dead. Worse, they also found that sea bass, crabs, and other sea creatures were getting stuck in these abandoned traps.

These traps also affect navigational safety and damage fishing equipment and boats on the Sound.

We need better collection legislation to remove these traps. Current restrictions on who can retrieve these abandoned pots make it almost impossible to mount a full-scale cleanup. I urge you to pass SB 426 to ease restrictions on who can retrieve abandoned lobster pots in Connecticut waters.

#### In SUPPORT of SB 341—AAC CLOTHING FIBER POLLUTION

Microfibers are a dangerous microplastic, released from synthetic material such as polyester, nylon, acrylic, and rayon, when garments are washed.

Research finds that microfibers find their way into the digestive tracts of certain organisms causing starvation and reproductive failure; they also transport dangerous chemicals into the water. Microfibers have also been found in many aquatic species and by-products consumed by humans. That scariest part: these consequences remain unknown.

Companies like Patagonia, Nike, Levi Strauss, VF Corporation, and Puma have all taken steps to mitigate the effects of microplastic pollution.

I urge you to hold apparel companies responsible for the effects of their products through this legislation.

#### In SUPPORT of SB 343—AAC THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE SAFETY PLANS OF CERTAIN CHEMICAL FACILITIES IN THE STATE AND RESIDENTS OF DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES

I urge you to pass this bill to require updated safety plans for certain chemical facilities that are at risk of coastal and river flooding and severe weather events that would release toxic mixture into waters and soil.

It would also establish a Climate Justice Working Group. Many of these chemical facilities are in low-income areas that don't have resources or options available to address flooding events that would cause disaster from chemical spills. The Long Island Blue Plan Inventory lists 17 petroleum terminals located primarily in Bridgeport and New Haven. Plans should be updated and shared with the communities that don't have resources or options available to address flooding event responses.

I ask that through these three bills you continue to protect the health of my family, our environment, and Long Island Sound.

Sincerely,

Mr. Joseph Bernier

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