

**CONNECTICUT RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

March 11, 2019

HB 5384 AN ACT REQUIRING THE ELIMINATION OF SINGLE- USE STYROFOAM CONTAINERS

HB 5385 AN ACT REQUIRING THE ELIMINATION OF SINGLE- USE PLASTIC STRAWS

The Connecticut Restaurant Association is a statewide trade association representing restaurants and affiliated businesses across our state. There are over 8,000 eating and drinking establishments in Connecticut. Our members range from quick-service to casual to fine-dining establishments. The Connecticut hospitality industry employs an estimated 155,000 people, making up 10% of our states' workforce. Restaurants are a driving force in the state's economy and generate tremendous tax revenue.

HB 5384 seeks to eliminate the use of Styrofoam containers in restaurants. While many restaurants have made the transition to other, more environmentally friendly, to-go containers, on their own, all restaurants are not in the position to do so.

HB 5385 would require full service restaurants to eliminate the use of plastic straws unless customers request them. There are many restaurants across Connecticut that have already eliminated plastic straws entirely, or don't provide them unless guests request them.

The Connecticut Restaurant Association supports the ability for business owners to make their own choices as to what is best for their business and their customers. While we appreciate the intent of these proposals as many of our members are already practicing what these proposals would mandate, we ask the legislature not to enact unenforceable mandates on the restaurant industry in the current business climate.

In 2019, our industry is facing the prospect of major increases in our labor and other costs due to potential mandated wage increases, paid family and medical leave, expansion of the bottle bill, a sugar tax, etc. Due to these concerns, we respectfully request the Environment Committee reject these proposals and allow the market and the industry to continue to adapt on their own.