Testimony of Patricia Taylor  
Director of the Plastics Project  
Environment and Human Health, Inc.

Bill 5019

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FIVE-CENT TAX ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS.

To the Chairmen of the Environment Committee, Senator Cohen and Representative Demicco, and Members of the Environment Committee:

As Director of the Plastics Project for Environment and Human Health, Inc., we are NOT in favor of Bill 5019.

This bill is a tax. Bill 5019’s secondary intent is to reduce the use of plastics. Our individual tax burden – what we each pay in local and state taxes - in Connecticut is already the second highest rate in the nation, according to the Tax Foundation’s State and Local Tax Burden Rankings Study. Another tax will be very unwelcome to residents.

Environment and Health prefers other methods that more effectively result in reduced use of plastics and are less unfriendly to Connecticut residents. Plastics may harm human health, have serious negative impact on our local and global lands and waterways, and are a significant burden to towns, cities and the State of Connecticut’s solid waste management system. It is crucial that we begin now to reduce our use of plastics.

Our survey of local, state, and national legislation, whose first aim it is to reduce or eliminate the use of single-use plastic and paper bags, shows that the most effective way to achieve this goal is to prohibit the use of single-use plastic bags, and to charge a fee of 10¢ for paper bags, with the fee to remain with store owners. By staying with the store, the fee will help owners to defray the bigger cost of paper bags. This fee also serves to encourage customers to use reusable bags, rather than to simply move over from using plastic to paper bags. The fee can be waived for customers participating in governmental food assistance programs.

Thank you for your attention,

Patricia Taylor  
Director of the Plastics Project,  
Environment and Human Health, Inc.  
March 7, 2019