March 11, 2019

Senator Christine Cohen, Chair
Representative Mike Demicco, Chair
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Senator Cohen, Representative Demicco, and distinguished members of the Environment Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB-5385: AN ACT REQUIRING THE ELIMINATION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC STRAWS.

This bill would prohibit the owners or operators of a full-service restaurant from providing a single-use straw unless requested by the consumer.

California passed a law this year prohibiting full-service restaurants from automatically providing customers with single-use plastic straws. The law applies to restaurants that have employees escort or assign customers to an eating area, take orders after customers are seated, directly deliver food or beverages to customers, and deliver the check directly to the customer at the eating area. Consequently, the law does not apply to fast food restaurants.

A similar proposal in New York bans certain restaurants from providing plastic straws to customers, unless requested.

In these states, a “single-use plastic straw” is a disposable tube made mainly of plastic that is derived from either petroleum or a biologically based polymer, such as plant sources, used to transfer a beverage from a container to the mouth of the person drinking the beverage.

The definition specifically excludes straws made from non-plastic materials (e.g., paper, pasta, sugar cane, wood, bamboo).

This bill is aimed to reduce litter in parks, waterways and urban areas and to create cost savings in the recycling process. Straws were 7th on the list of trash collected during the 2017 Ocean Conservancy coastal cleanup. Plastic straws cannot be recycled as they are too small and slip...
through recycling machinery and are not biodegradable. Because they are lightweight plastic they easily get blown from landfills or garbage trucks into storm drains and the ocean and onto coastal beaches. Many then end-up in animals’ stomachs and killing them or being broken down into micro-plastics which fish eat. It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish.

Sincerely,

Dorinda Borer  
State Representative  
115th District