Testimony Submitted to the Committee on the Environment:
H.B. 5385, AN ACT REQUIRING THE ELIMINATION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC STRAWS
March 11, 2019

Senator Cohen, Representative Dimicco, Senator Miner, Representative Harding, and distinguished members of the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding H.B. 5385.

While I support the effort and the need to reduce the use of plastics because of the environmental impacts from improper disposal, I am concerned that this bill, as currently written, discriminates against people with disabilities for whom a plastic straw is a necessity to drink any liquid.

In conversations with several people who rely on plastic straws, they have educated me about the choking risk from paper straws, the risk of dental damage from metal straws, and the difficulty and effort needed in using plant-based straws.

While I understand differentiating by type of restaurant may have been a compromise for a certain constituency, the need for using a plastic straw does not change for people depending on what type of restaurant they choose to patronize.

I request that the Committee consider extending the ‘on request’ availability to all restaurants and convenience outlets, so as not to discriminate against our citizens with disabilities.