TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Monday, March 11, 2019

SB 229 An Act Prohibiting the Use of Styrofoam Trays in Connecticut Schools

The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) is a non-profit professional association that represents school business officials throughout the State of Connecticut. School business officials work closely with school boards, school superintendents, administrators, staff, public officials and communities; and we are responsible for most aspects of school business and operations. This includes, but is not limited to, overseeing food service programs.

As the Committee and the public discuss the topic, we are providing below some information to put some much-needed context around the impact that prohibiting styrofoam trays will have on food service programs throughout the State. Obviously, school districts have few good choices when it comes to implementing this prohibition. School districts will have to increase meal prices or request additional support from taxpayers for food service operations. In the end, the added cost of alternatives to styrofoam trays would be yet another unfunded mandate for our schools.

An alternative to styrofoam are paper trays, which cost three times as much and some are not durable enough for some uses. Also, the selection of paper products is often limited. Reusable trays are another possibility, but many schools are not built to accommodate tray washing and such practice requires additional labor and utility costs. Schools that have used reusable trays also found that students often threw them out and they were constantly replacing them. As a result, some switched back to styrofoam.

We provide this information so the Committee understands that there are serious unintended consequences to this bill. For many school districts, this proposal would represent another unfunded mandate. Consequently, the state should provide funding to help implement such a proposal if it were to become law.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to comment on this important matter.