March 11, 2019

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-240-0440
evtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Re:
SUPPORT SB 229 (prohibits use of polystyrene trays in schools)
SUPPORT SB 1003 (bans single-use plastic and paper bags)
SUPPORT HB 5019 (five cent tax on single-use plastic and paper bags)
SUPPORT HB 5384 (bans single-use polystyrene containers)
SUPPORT HB 5385 (bans single-use plastic straws).

Dear Co-Chair Cohen, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Kushner, Vice Chair Gresko, Ranking Member Miner, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut-based supporters of The Humane Society of the United States, the largest animal protection organization in the country, please accept this public hearing testimony in SUPPORT of SB 229, SB 1003, HB 5019, HB 5384, and HB 5385—intended to reduce the volume of plastics (single-use and polystyrenes) in the environment.

Single-use plastics and polystyrenes are detrimental to the environment and wildlife. Many seabirds, sea turtles, seals, and other marine mammals are killed each year after ingestion or entanglement. Per the Center for Biological Diversity, endangered wildlife like Hawaiian monk seals\(^1\) and Pacific loggerhead sea turtles\(^2\) are among nearly 300 species that eat and get caught in plastic litter\(^3\). Scientists estimate that 90% of all seabirds alive today have ingested plastic during their life and marine litter harms over 600 species\(^4\). A report\(^5\) from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in partnership with the World Economic Forum predicts that by 2050 plastic in the ocean could weigh more than fish.

Plastics that wash into our oceans break down into microplastics, which are now pervasive throughout our ocean ecosystem. Microplastics cause problems with ingestion for marine and

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\(^1\) http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/mammals/Hawaiian_monk_seal/index.html
\(^2\) http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/reptiles/loggerhead_sea_turtle/index.html
\(^3\) https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/ocean_plastics/
\(^5\) https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/ocean_plastics/
aquatic invertebrates – including species such as mussels, clams, oysters, and scallops – who fill their stomachs with tiny plastic beads instead of food particles, some dying of starvation as a result. Items that are used once and thrown in the landfill and can take years (sometimes hundreds of years) to decompose.

The time for action is now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Annie Hornish
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