

EXPLOITERS **FRIENDS** **of ANIMALS**

March 11, 2019

Environment Committee
LOB Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106
Submitted by Priscilla Feral, President/ Friends of Animals

envtestimony@cga.ct.gov

RE: SUPPORT S.B. 229/ S.B. 1003/H.B. 5384/ H.B. 5385/ H.B. 5019

Single-use plastic and Styrofoam containers wreak havoc on the environment and imperil marine animals and wildlife. More than five trillion particles of plastic clog our world's oceans, according to the PLOS One report. And Americans are doing their share to contribute to the problem, tossing out more than 33 million tons of plastic – including 175 million straws each day. On behalf of Friends of Animals, an international non-profit domestic and wildlife advocacy organization, and its 6,000 members in CT, we urge you to support the elimination and restrictions of these wasteful plastics.

Plastic marine debris adversely affects at least 267 species globally, including 86% of sea turtles, 44% of seabirds and 43% of marine mammals.

Sea turtles, for example, readily consume plastic bags because they look so much like jellyfish. And seabirds are prone to ingesting microplastic debris that floats. The ingestion of plastic particles can lead to impairment of feeding capacity due to blockage of the digestive system, decreased mobility, reduction of reproductive capacity, infection, suffocation and starvation.

Aquatic plastic debris not only affects animals, it can alter their habitat. As debris accumulates, habitat structure may be modified, light levels may be reduced in underlying waters and oxygen levels depleted.

Friends of Animals' headquarters is near a plethora of important coastal habitats, including beaches and dunes, coastal wetlands, shellfish reefs and freshwater wetlands. After a big rain, the coastline will be scattered with litter. Items such as coffee cups, single-use plastic carry-out bags, and produce bags that didn't make it to a garbage receptacle or that overflowed will eventually flow to Long Island Sound.

Many states and municipalities have already moved to banning single-use foam and plastics with proven results. Rahway, New Jersey has long banned plastic-foam containers, and New York City has eliminated Styrofoam trays in all its public schools. That decision in 2013 eliminated 860,000 Styrofoam trays used per day in 1,800 schools. Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, Orlando, and Dallas public schools have followed suit.

Austin, Cambridge, Chicago and Seattle that have banned single-use plastic carry-out bags and so have California and Hawaii.

Preliminary data in California has shown that plastic bags, both the banned and still legal variety, accounted for 3.1% of the litter collected from the state's beaches during the 2017 Coastal Cleanup Day, down from 7.4% in 2010, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Local municipalities within CT, including Greenwich, Westport, Stamford and Norwalk, have moved in the right direction, banning single-use plastic bags. But a hodge-podge of rules in limited areas creates confusion and difficulties for consumers and businesses. On a state level, it doesn't make sense to allow the use of foam and plastics products of an indestructible material for just minutes by consumers, only to be discarded into the environment where they stay for hundreds of years, endangering wildlife and human ecosystems.

It's time for CT to ban all wasteful single-use plastics, including foam trays, plastic bags, and straws.

#Give a Sip and stop the waste.

Sincerely,



Priscilla Feral

Friends of Animals is an international animal protection organization founded in New York in 1957, advocates for the rights of animals, free-living and domestic around the world.