Testimony of Patricia Taylor
Director of the Plastics Project
Environment and Human Health, Inc.

Bill 1003

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS.

To the Chairmen of the Environment Committee, Senator Cohen and Representative Demicco, and Members of the Environment Committee:

As Director of the Plastics Project for Environment and Human Health, Inc., we want to express our support for Bill 1003.

This bill seeks to prohibit the use of single-use plastic bags, and to regulate single-use paper bags to ensure they are recyclable and made from recycled content.

Single-use plastic bags have only been in use in the United States since 1982. Scientists are now assessing their negative impact on human health and the environment. The working life of a single-use plastic bag is only about fifteen minutes. In Connecticut, since most of our garbage is incinerated, most plastic bags are incinerated, or they end up as litter. Very few of these bags are recycled - roughly 100,000 of these bags end up in Long Island Sound every year.

Because of their potential harmfulness, we support the prohibition on single-use plastic bags but advise that the bill, as written, will not effectively encourage customers to use reusable bags. It is important for this bill to include a fee of 10¢ for each paper bag, and for the fee to remain with the store owner. Such fees, in conjunction with bans on single-use plastic bags, have been shown to increase the effectiveness of similar legislation in other municipalities.

We also recommend that the 10¢ fee on paper bags be waived for customers who participate in governmental food assistance programs.

Thank you for your attention,

Patricia Taylor
Director of the Plastics Project,
Environment and Human Health, Inc.
March 7, 2019