March 11, 2019

Honorable Christine Cohen, Chair
State of Connecticut
Committee on the Environment
Legislative Office Building
Room 3200
Hartford, CT  06106-1591

Honorable Mike Demicco, Chair
State of Connecticut
Committee on the Environment
Legislative Office Building
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Senate Chair Cohen; Representative Chair Demicco; and, Honorable Committee Members:

Dart Container Corporation (Dart) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Connecticut HB 5384 – “An Act Requiring The Elimination of Single-Use Styrofoam Containers.”

Background

Dart is a global manufacturer of food service containers - both plastic and paper, including products made from polystyrene (#6) in both foamed (“EPS”) and rigid form (Red Solo Cup); recyclable; and, compostable products.

Dart is and continues to be actively engaged in recycling and educating the public on the environmental attributes of foam including the ability for it to be recycled.

In 1990, Dart began recycling post-consumer foam. Today, Dart offers to the public a variety of ways for recycling of foam. Dart facilities have public drop-off centers for foam at no charge to any resident consumer or government. Dart accepts all EPS – either made by Dart or any other manufacturer – including food service and shape molded block foam.

I. Ban Impact on Connecticut Small Businesses, Restaurants and Nonprofits
Banning EPS foam food containers will have a negative economic impact on Connecticut’s businesses – large and small. A disproportionate economic impact will fall on small family owned operations and nonprofits that serve the most vulnerable in Connecticut - church soup kitchens, homeless and abuse shelters. All of these entities operate with no profit margin and cannot stand with additional costs that put their services at risk.

Operating a restaurant, especially a family owned and operated, is already challenging with high operating; labor; health; insurance; and, other unforeseen costs. Forcing small businesses to purchase more expensive alternatives to EPS (which, incidentally, have a higher carbon foot print and weigh more than EPS and thus take up more space in landfills) will drive up prices and operating costs. At twice the cost of EPS, paper alternatives will result in businesses laying off its workers or worse, closing for good. This is not a productive way to support small, family owned businesses, which are paramount to Connecticut’s economy.

II. Increased Costs and Fiscal Impact to Residents and Taxpayers

If this statewide ban passes, there will be two significant new costs to Connecticut residents and taxpayers.

First, the added costs incurred by Connecticut consumers buying food and beverages served in the more expensive, alternative foodservice containers – a cost that will be passed along or consumed by businesses.

This will result in a higher priced consumer product regardless.

If Connecticut’s foam recycling ability is eliminated by state legislation under this bill – Connecticut residents and municipalities must budget and pay for the majority of EPS foam - primarily the block foam not covered under this state ban – which can be recycled.

Otherwise, all the EPS foam currently available for collection and recycling will now be in the Connecticut waste stream.

Alternative materials that would be required to replace foam, only adds to the end of life costs to dispose of substitute products - weighs 2.5 times more by weight and volume; and, will only add to higher landfill tipping fees, costs and reduce available landfill space.

With each added cost to Connecticut businesses - mandating they use a particular, higher priced product that will not be composted or recycled (but indeed landfilled because Connecticut does not maintain a municipal composting facility that composts foodservice products) – this would be an added financial cost to municipalities.

Pertinent Foam Facts:

- Better product – better insulation for food which will eliminate waste.
- Life Cycle Analysis – less greenhouse gasses, less resources such as water to produce a foam cup. Less energy to produce
- Less products used – coffee or soda is served in one foam cup. Alternatives need a java jacket for hot items and napkins for sweating on cold applications.
- Foam makes up less than 1% by both weight and volume of our landfill waste. Paper cups end up in landfills more than foam.
- Alternatives are not disposed of properly which will add more solid waste to landfills. Paper cups are coated with plastic. Meaning the paper cup is no longer biodegradable. Compost products are thrown out in a garbage and end up in a landfill. They will not compost sitting in a landfill.

Again, this proposed ban will not accomplish the goal of reducing solid waste in Connecticut. Many people believe that a ban of foodservice foam will eliminate all foam within Connecticut. However, this misses the mark. The issue of packaging foam (not addressed here) is the majority of foam used in the stream of commerce is not addressed here.

III. Misinformation Regarding Health

According to Jack Snyder, executive director of the Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC) – maintains there are no safety or health concerns regarding styrene in food service polystyrene products, and that this conclusion has been supported by the U.S. FDA for several decades. This research has been conducted by world-recognized independent scientists, and published in respected peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Styrene is a chemical building block not only of polystyrene food containers, but also tires, insulation, carpet backing, boat hulls, and bathtubs.

For more than 70 years, styrene has been produced to create polymers to manufacture thousands of consumer products. Because it occurs naturally, and is a widely used manufacturing material, nearly everyone encounters very small amounts of styrene in some form every day.

All scientifically, peer reviewed polystyrene research and studies show that polystyrene packaging consumers use are not harmful. Studies further show that styrene does not stay in the body for long and is rapidly metabolized and excreted. The most current, extensive research also indicates that styrene is not a human carcinogen.

SIRC strongly believes the data on styrene show that styrene exposure to consumers from polystyrene products does not present a health effect concern.

IV. Conclusion

For the reasons mentioned herein, Dart respectfully requests a negative report to this proposed legislation; and. This bill will result in higher costs to consumers; and costs to Connecticut municipalities (in police enforcement and tipping fees) – costing Connecticut residents more in tax dollars to manage product alternatives of higher weight and volume at the end of life disposal.
Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul Poe
Manager, Government Affairs and the Environment