

TESTIMONY OF TOM SWAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP (CCAG)

February 21, 2020

BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

IN SUPPORT OF

H.B. No. 5103 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING AN EVALUATION OF THE STATE'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LAW

S.B. No. 99 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS

Senator Cohen, Representative Demicco and other members of the Environmental Committee my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group (CCAG). On behalf of our thousands of members statewide I want to thank you for raising H.B. No. 5103 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING AN EVALUATION OF THE STATE'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LAW, S.B. No. 99 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS and urge passage.

Our nation's long history of environmental racism is indisputable, and the legacy of these decisions can still be seen in numerous public health statistics like asthma and cancer rates. We support H.B. No. 5103 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING AN EVALUATION OF THE STATE'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LAW as an important step in reversing this legacy for generations to come. It is common sense that there is greater notification of environmental justice communities of proposed projects, increased mechanisms for participation and in the possible negotiation of community benefit agreements, and a stronger enforcement mechanism. These communities deserve these protections and the accountability this bill proposes.

CCAG also supports S.B. No. 99 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS. The unnecessary harmful effects of the wide use of polystyrene products is becoming clearer by the day. An ever-increasing number of communities are moving away from using these products. While we are skeptical of the claims by some of the hardship such a ban may create, the proposed process with DEEP should make such claims irrelevant to your consideration.

Thank you again for all of your efforts and we look forward to working with you to make these bills become laws.