



**For the Environment Committee  
Testimony of Alicea Charamut, Executive Director  
February 15, 2023**

*Rivers Alliance was formed to fight for sound water policies at the state and federal levels, to provide education on water resources, and to advocate for any person or group striving to protect water. If you want clean, free-flowing and healthy rivers, and high-quality drinking water, Rivers Alliance is here to help.*

**SB 299 AAC THE DISTRIBUTION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC STRAWS – Support**

Several years ago, my friend Leah – then nine years old – volunteered for the Connecticut River Conservancy’s Source to Sea Cleanup at Wethersfield Cove. She found so many straws it made her extremely angry (I’m not exaggerating). She resolved to give up plastic straws and earnestly followed through on this resolution. She further shamed her family into giving up plastic straws and persuaded her Girl Scout Troop to study the problem of plastic pollution for their Mall Madness project that same year.

People like Leah who have witnessed the extent of litter in the form of single-use plastics which cannot be easily recycled know that the time to pass laws to reduce single-use plastics is now. Not only do they contribute to plastic pollution in our waterways and oceans, but they are an unnecessary burden on our municipal and state solid waste programs that are currently under stress.

This bill is not a full ban on plastic straws. This is bill that would ensure that the Leahs of the world do not end up with straws forced upon them by full-service eating establishments. One can’t give back a straw that has already been placed in a drink or if the wrapper has been soiled after being placed on a dining table. These straws will get thrown away which is exactly what Leah has made a personal choice to avoid.

This bill will not prevent anyone who needs or wants a straw from getting a straw in a full-service restaurant. Please allow those of us who choose not use plastic straws make that choice for ourselves. Please pass this bill.