

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Testimony on House Bill Nos. 6606 and 6608
Environment Committee
Submitted by Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
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Co-Chairs Lopes and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Hochadel and Palm, Ranking Members Harding and Callahan, and members of the Environment Committee:

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) is the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its ~130 land trusts. We advocate for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and work to ensure the long-term strength and viability of Connecticut's land conservation community.

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in support of **House Bill No. 6606, An Act Concerning the Use of Certain Products Made from Polystyrene and House Bill No. 6608, An Act Concerning the Distribution of Single-Use Plastic Straws by Certain Restaurants.**

Land conservation is as much about the perpetual care of the habitats and other conservation values of the land as it is about securing the legal protection of the property to begin with. Land stewardship is a huge responsibility of land trust and community park and open space volunteers and staff. Their daily work includes everything from implementing management plans, building and maintaining trails, battling invasives, monitoring for violations of conservation easements, encroachments and other illegal activity, to picking up trash.

In addition to becoming a common source of litter in the landscape and waterways of the state, polystyrene and plastic straws pose serious threats to the environment. Neither are biodegradable and can last in the environment for years. These plastics pose a threat to birds, fish, and other wildlife through ingestion and, in the case of straws, lodging in noses, throats, and stomachs. Furthermore, like other forms of plastics, when they do break down, they become microplastics that pollute our air and waters and infiltrate the systems of fish, animals, and humans alike.

These bills are an important step in the right direction in controlling the proliferation of plastics in our environment. HB 6606 would eliminate the use of school trays made from polystyrene and prohibit the use of certain polystyrene food containers by restaurants. HB 6608 would curtail (but not eliminate) the distribution of single-use plastic straws at certain restaurants. Both bills would help to raise public awareness of the hazards these plastics pose to the environment, support stewardship of conservation lands and waters, and protect wildlife and their habitats throughout the state.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our testimony, and for all you do. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

