

CHAIRPERSONS: Senator Christine Cohen,
Representative Dorinda Borer

SENATORS: Haskell, Kasser, Kushner, Miner

REPRESENTATIVES: Berger-Girvalo, Betts,
Callahan, Chafee, Demicco,
Dillon, Dubitsky, Gresko,
Gucker, Harding, Harrison,
Hennessy, Horn, Michel,
Mushinsky, O'Dea, Palm, Parker,
Piscopo, Reyes, Ryan, Smith,
Wilson, Young

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Good morning, everybody. Welcome to our March 3rd public hearing of the Environment Committee. We've got a robust agenda today with a lot of speakers signed up. I'm looking at the list here. Looks like we've got 61 folks signed up to testify. So, we will get right into it. But I will first ask if my Co-Chair has any remarks before we start.

REP. BORER (115TH): Sure. Thank you, Senator Cohen for kicking us off today, and hello to all of our Members and our public audience. I'm just looking forward to hearing the testimony today and the input has been very valuable to date. I'm so ready to hear the contribution to this legislation. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. And I know Representative Harding will be joining us shortly. We're all trying to balance multiple meetings here. But I --

REP. HARDING (107TH): I'm here now.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Oh, there you are.

REP. HARDING (107TH): Yes, hi. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Any remarks before we start our hearing today.

REP. HARDING (107TH): Nothing further. Thank you for the acknowledgement, Madam Chair. I look forward to some testimony today and getting to learn more about these proposals. So, thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Great, thanks. And Senator Miner, any remarks?

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Good morning, and I also look forward to the public hearing. I just like to note that there are a number of Bills with DEEP involvement and if I could, Madame Chair maybe we could figure out a way rather than have this be a dominant kind of topic today. Maybe the leadership could figure out a way to schedule a meeting with the agency separately after this, just to go through these Bills. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Senator. I don't think that that's a bad idea. I'm looking forward to DEEP testimony this morning, but Commissioner has a lot of work cut out for going through each of these items. So, we'll look forward to continue conversation, but certainly wanting to hear from Commissioner Dykes on these items and give the Committee opportunity to ask questions as appropriate.

So, with that, let's get started and Commissioner Dykes. Welcome.

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: Great. Well, good morning, Senator Cohen, Representative Borer, Senator Miner and Representative Harding and distinguished Members of the Environment Committee I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony today on a number of Bills. As Senator Miner mentioned there is a bit of DEEP domination here, which is never a bad thing in my view, but always appreciate the indulgence of the time.

I'll be -- I'll try to be very brief. I'm just gonna highlight a few proposals that we have provided written testimony on. First, Senate Bill 931 is a proposal that would authorize DEEP to evaluate California's heavy duty, medium and heavy duty vehicle emission standards, and grant DEEP authority to adopt standards provided. They're identical to those adopted by California. If the Commissioner determines that such standards are necessary to meet air quality and climate change goals.

Just to underscore for the committee this is, you know, we are out of it. We struggle with ozone and poor air quality here in the state contributing to acute and chronic respiratory problems. We know through the tragic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic about the special vulnerability that respiratory illness caused by air pollution can create for populations in our state. And so, this proposal would enable us to move forward to help support the transition and implementation of cleaner transportation solutions, especially in the medium and heavy duty sector.

The mobile sources in our state account for 67% of NOx emissions, nitrogen oxides, which are a central component of the formation of ozone and heavy duty vehicles account for 40% of those emissions. And as we continue to make progress in reducing emissions from light duty vehicles, that medium and heavy duty sector becomes a more pronounced portion of our air pollution. So, it's really critically important that we have this authority to be able to support the deployment of more clean and electric vehicles to help reduce air pollution in our state.

I know that there's been a lot of news making headlines around manufacturers having breakthroughs in terms of reduced to costs of batteries and other components. And certainly there's a lot of momentum even since last year when we introduced or this legislation was introduced in the shortened session

last year. We've seen much progress in manufacturers making commitments to shift to electric vehicles. And that includes in the medium and heavy duty space.

The reduced cost of maintenance for these vehicles helps to offset the upfront costs of purchasing electric trucks. And so, we believe that this can be a very cost-effective option for folks over time. We also expect that the transportation initiative program which we look forward to testifying about next year will provide additional support for charging infrastructure and possibly other incentives that can increase vehicle deployment to help comply with these types of regulations if our evaluation concludes that they should move forward as the Bill's constructed.

So pleased to bring this one to your attention this morning. Also wanted to provide a testimony highlighting House Bill 6496, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SOIL-RELATED INITIATIVES. I know that the Committee is aware that there's so much opportunity for us to transform and accelerate and improve the affordability of a cleanup of contaminated sites across the state. The progress that this Committee supported in authorizing DEEP to move forward with a release based cleanup program for contaminated sites. The efforts that we're so excited about in terms of adopting RSR and EUR regulations, I think will also be comp -- All of those reforms that are spurring more cleanups and will make cleanup of contaminated sites more affordable and easier to do.

And that that's so important for economic development across the state. With that context, I highlight this as another opportunity in section, sorry, section one of the Bill. It reflects the DEEP has been approached by a number of developers who are identifying opportunities for redevelopment at locations that require beneficial use of very large quantities of soils, that are lightly contaminated.

And so, this would be something that we think that carefully done with appropriate oversight and standards established by DEEP. we can repurpose those types of lightly contaminated soils in the right and appropriate locations that is protective of human health and the environment while reducing the transportation costs that developers currently occur for managing these types of lightly contaminated soils, where there are no opportunities for appropriate local use or reuse today.

So, this is one that, you know, section one is something that we're very, very interested in and we think will be another important arrow in the quiver for supporting more cleanup of contaminated sites, making that more affordable, more effective for folks to do across the state.

I'll note that we raised in our written testimony some areas in sections two through five, where we'd like to continue work with the Committee. Certainly, you know, we recognize the importance of addressing soil health. We think that to achieve the objectives of this Bill, you know, it implicates a discussion around available resources and the opportunity to work with other state agencies who have expertise in this area.

House Bill 6501 is a another really important Bill. This includes a number of streamlining recommendations for certain programs of the department. I won't go through each one of those opportunities individually, but as a group, as a collective, they reflect the continued focus that we have at DEEP on ways to make compliance with our various regulatory programs, easier and more affordable, for applicants and for municipalities and others that we work with it. You know, these are in some ways, can be barely minor revisions, but they help to reduce duplicative process and limit regulatory burden, and wherever we can do that, it ensures that our resources at DEEP are trained on those regulatory objectives that are most impactful.

And so, I just commend the Committee for raising House Bill 6501 and as we know how important that will be for our department.

Finally, House Bill 6499 is AN ACT CONCERNING RADIATION SECURITY. This also is a proposal that we were seeking last year. We strongly support this Bill. What it will do is establish enable Connecticut to join 39 other states that have adopted Agreement State Status, and to help reduce the cost of compliance with some of our radiation security programs, and provide more locally responsive regulation and administration of those programs. It just makes a lot of sense in terms of providing for a more cost effective and more accessible approach to this program. And following in this footsteps is a very large number of other states that have moved to Agreement State Status.

Very simply what this Bill does is that it establishes the statutory authority for Connecticut to enter into an agreement with the nuclear regulatory commission for Connecticut for Connecticut DEEP to locally administer some of those requirements of the NRC for ensuring the safety and security of radioactive materials. This Bill would not make -- would not apply to nuclear power plants and nuclear fuel storage facilities, but rather to other regulatory authority over types of radioactive material used in industrial academic and healthcare facilities.

Governor Lamont submitted a letter of intent to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in December to help us begin some of the early stages of evaluating and initiating this process to become an agreement state. But we certainly need the support of the General Assembly and Statutory Authority in order to move forward with that process. And so, we would be delighted to take any questions you may have on the benefits of this proposal and certainly any of the Bills that you have before you today.

So, thank you for the opportunity to testify. And I should also mention, I have many members of my team here, thank you for your indulgence, and including them virtually on them, our Deputy Commissioners for Environmental Quality, Betsey Wingfield and for Environmental Conservation, Mason Trumble, and other terrific members of our staff are with us.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Commissioner and I'm impressed that you were able to get through all of those Bills or your testimony of those Bills so quickly and efficiently. So, I appreciate that. Certainly, it sets us up for a good day, I think. I'll take some questions from the Committee first and then I have some questions as well.

So, Representative Dillon, I see you have your hand raised, please.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you, Madam Chair. And Good morning, Commissioner. Thank you so much for your testimony. If you could provide some clarity of position on Senate Bill 927. I believe that Senator Looney's bill which was really inspired by a very situation where the town of New Haven was not alerted about a spill and there was some concern about a potential threat to the oyster beds. I didn't -- I didn't say this year being the year of the oyster but that seems to be happening.

I wonder what do you mean when you say you're meeting with stakeholders? Because obviously there's a lot of concern when you're looking at the Mill River intersecting there, and the time of what's happening with the business there. Anyway, I'm sorry, I was a little lengthy there, but it sounds like you're opposed to the current language and that's worrisome to me and I just wonder if he could be helpful in that regard. Thank you.

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: I'm going to turn to our Bureau Chief Graham Stevens to respond to your question, Representative Dillon, thank you.

GRAHAM STEVENS: Good morning everyone. My name is Graham Stevens. I'm the Bureau Chief of Water Protection and Land Reuse at DEEP. And Representative, thank you for your question. And just to clarify with respect to this Bill, Senate Bill 927, DEEP is supportive of improvements to the Sewage Right-To-Know Act. And I think that this was an important statute that came into being, you know, and we've had some lessons learned with respect to the system that we have in place now. We've been speaking with many stakeholders for some time, that that even predated the spill that you referred to that impacted the Mill River and multiple communities this past summer.

And I think really what we're talking about as far as changes are some nuanced changes, and some of those changes, you know, we've already had discussions with the stakeholders on, so this has been an ongoing process and probably the language that the Committee put together, which is a good step forward. You know, we've evolved a little bit in our thinking since then between the stakeholders. So, we're very happy to work with the Committee to make sure that we enact not only changes that improve the public's knowledge of sewer spills, but also ensures that the ongoing contractual process we're engaged in to bring a new vendor on to aid in the public knowledge of sewer spills is honored.

So, we don't want the Bill to necessarily require us to do something that is beyond the contractor's ability. We went through a lengthy contracting process to bring on a vendor that other states have used. We're talking with other states. So, we're trying to really be comprehensive in the way that we change the statute for the benefit of the public.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you. If I could ask one, just follow up, I think this is probably going to go on outside of this process, outside of this particular venue. And I have no right to speak for Senator Looney, but it seems to me intuitive that if two towns border each other, and if there is something important happening downstream and adjacent to the event and I almost have to look at a map that shouldn't be a heavy lift to alert the adjacent town. And I certainly don't want to compromise any delicate conversations or any contract, but there could've been a lot of stake. Am I not clear yet whether or not there were any serious consequences?

GRAHAM STEVENS: I totally agree with you Representative. We totally agree with you. And we feel that, you know, there should have been better communication even under the existing law. And I think that changes in the law that we support will provide greater clarity on notification, particularly to municipal officials and other municipal officials that should be working with the members of the -- residents of their town to ensure that folks are safe. So, absolutely we agree with that approach and we concur with your statement there.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you very much.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Representative Borer, my Co-Chair.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. I just wanted to also respond to Representative Dillon because you're absolutely right when there was a spill this summer into the Mill River, we had gotten together to determine where was the gap? Where was the notification gap, the communication gap, and what do we do -- what do we need to do tight in this legislation? So, Representative Reyes was a very big part of that as well. We met with Betsy and

Commissioner Dykes and came up with some thoughts around how to change that.

Save the Sound was very instrumental in creating this language as well for this legislation today as well, Senator Cohen, you know, the whole leadership team. So, we think that this is a better approach because there was gaps in the notification from one city to the next. You know, because it's supposed to go with elected officials downstream, but elected officials aren't always on their email or may not always see that communication. So, we also brought the health directors into the loop as part of that notification and a little bit more requirements on the DEEP side as well.

So, you know, of course there's always opportunity for improvement, but this is something that we've been working on since the summer. And I think we're in a good place, but, you know, unfortunately we don't, hopefully we don't find out in the next Bill that we missed something, but we'll always work to improve this, but thank you for your thoughts.

GRAHAM STEVENS: And thank you, Representative.

REP. DILLON (92ND): I'm sorry if I misrepresented, but I was interpreting, I heard the conversations, and I was interpreting the Commissioner's testimony perhaps incorrectly, it sounded like she was not totally on board with what, you know, with changes, but I'm sure there's conversations will go forward and rightly so thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thanks. And I just wanted to clarify the communication aspect, but thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you both. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. So, I'm not sure who the stakeholders are. I'm not sure my name is on that list of stakeholders. I do think

we've made an attempt here to try and make the current situation obsolete and make the future situation better. But I too have some questions about the way it's been drafted and it might be interpreted in line 11, 10, 11, talking about partially treated sewage. And I'm not sure what the threshold is partially treated sewage, probably a heavy rain event. Many of our large, maybe many of our sewer treatment facilities causes that kind of a discharge. So, I do look forward to a continued conversation. I think we have the ability to get a good Bill out of the Committee that would be helpful to all communities.

But once again, I stress the importance of trying to meet with the agency prior to moving the Bill. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Senator. And if I may, I have, Oh, Representative Harding.

REP. HARDING (107TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And I apologize for not putting my hand up quicker. I'm still trying to get used to all this. Thank you, Commissioner for testifying and for all your work. Just to have a question on the emission standards in regards to the cars, how do you see or foresee the department's enforcement, you know, practically on the spill and how they're going to regulate this. And obviously some of it has to be hashed out as we go along, but as of now, as the Bill was presented, how do you see the departments enforcement of all this? And how do you see that working out?

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: Let me turn -- obviously, to establishing these standards and, you know, primarily the focus is on shifting the mix of vehicles that are offered for sale, and so that minimizes the enforcement needs, but let me turn to -- or at least with respect to individual purchasers of those vehicles, but let me turn to Tracy Babbidge, who is our Bureau Chief for our air group.

Tracy, do you want -- could you respond more specifically?

TRACY BABBIDGE: Sure. Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you Representative for your question. Just sort of broad brush this, the requirements will apply to the medium and heavy duty vehicle sector. So, we're talking about everything, you know, from small step bands up to large heavy duty trucks. And it's useful to think about how we -- what we've done on the passenger vehicle side, as an example.

So, I first want to say the requirements apply to the engine manufacturers and the truck manufacturers. And one of the important pieces of this legislative proposal is that we're sending a signal to the manufacturers of these vehicles from small vans all the way through heavy duty. Uh, heavy duty trucks, larger diesel trucks that we want to see more of these cleaner vehicles placed in Connecticut.

So, what we're looking at is requirements that are around sale and delivery when we get to that point through our regulation. It's very similar to what we do now on the passenger vehicle side, so that we're looking at percentage of sales of those vehicles to be placed in Connecticut. So, that's how we would do it.

And also -- just also as a reminder, this effort, we have 15 States that have currently signed on to a Memorandum of Understanding to work on cleaner trucks. And so, similar to what we've done on the passenger vehicle side, we will be working collaboratively with our sister states regionally and across the country because this initiative will involve states across the country that are interested in pursuing this to make sure we're doing this in a consistent way that also shares resources.

So, I hope that answers your question.

REP. HARDING (107TH): It does. And I appreciate the answer. Thank you so much.

TRACY BABBIDGE: Sure.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. So, I do have a couple of questions, and I'll stick with that Bill initially SB 931, and just ask, I know that there's a Memorandum of Understanding with 14 other states, you would think as a result of that MOU that the industry is probably making some strides, one would hope, and electrifying or, you know, emissions control standards that they have in place for new vehicles that are on the road. I wonder if you could speak to what's going on in the industry, if anything.

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: Certainly, I know, highlighting what Tracy said, you know, signing on this, onto this MOU, the fact that we have so many jurisdictions that are participating across. It does send that strong signal to manufacturers in terms of where they're making their investment and the types of models that they're in technologies that they're focused on, that a significant part of the market share is participating in the MOU. And so that ensures the most cost-effective path for us to have, you know, access to these types of vehicles at a low cost and ensure compliance pathways that are there for, but affordable. But let me turn to Tracy to supplement that.

TRACY BABBIDGE: Sure. Thank you, Commissioner. And thank you, Senator Cohen for the question. We're seeing a lot of movement, especially in the smaller vehicle range, the smaller vans, the class twos, threes in that area as we see more things like Amazon delivery vans, maybe one example.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Can I just interrupt with that real quick, Tracy. So, are those considered medium duty vans or smaller vans?

TRACY BABBIDGE: Yes.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Thank you.

TRACY BABBIDGE: Yes, they are. Yep. And so, we are seeing much considerable movement in that area and I think, there's a lot of work that's going on now looking at the total cost of ownership and the savings associated with the move to electric that really overcomes, you know, any disparity in the upfront cost of going electric.

So, we're seeing much more movement and it's something we're really playing very close attention to because we're also seeing what's happening in a worldwide market because globally there are big moves being made in the Asian market. China has been going very big, which is also helping to drive costs down.

I think we see it on the continuum beginning with the smaller vehicles in the range, and then moving up the spectrum to the heavier, heavy duty vehicles in terms of costs coming down quickly. And again, it's also related to battery costs as battery costs continue to decline.

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: I also note that we are seeing expand as Tracy highlights what's happening on the manufacturing side, I'll also note that we're seeing real promising and strong interest from businesses here in the state, who are -- who may have internal sustainability goals or other types of motivations in terms of lowering their operating costs for their vehicle fleets. They are, you know, we have -- are able to provide for -- we administer a small grant program through EPA called the DERA Grant program, as well as our VW funds, which are target to medium and heavy duty. And we've seen, you know, an uptake in the number of applications coming in from Connecticut businesses who are interested in applying for those grants, which can help fund and

offset some of the upfront purchase costs for electric and lower emission diesel vehicles.

So, we're really excited about what those programs are telling us about the demand for these vehicles in states.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you for that. And, you know, along the same lines, I mean, the reason we're moving in this direction is that we're currently in non-attainment with NOx, the national ambient air quality standards. And I'm just wondering, is this sort of our idea of getting us back to attaining those standards or is that too late or attaining those standards? And if so, you know, are we doing it soon enough? Maybe 2050 is a long way off, you know, with this MOU to get to zero emissions. And I mean, obviously there would be progress along the way, but do we think that this is the magic bullet to get us there? Or are there -- is it a combination of items that the department's working on?

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: Well, certainly, NOx emissions are one, you know, the mobile sources are one of the largest contributors to NOx emissions in state. We are pursuing a portfolio, a whole range of strategies to try to regain attainment with the EPA standards, both in our stationary sources like power plants. Looking at our transportation sector is critical just because it contributes two thirds of the NOx emissions in state.

So, this is very important for us to make progress also very important for us to have these regulatory tools in the toolkit to address medium and heavy duty because as we continue -- we have been early movers on addressing light duty vehicles, our participation in that ZEV MOU some years ago, and the authority that we have to address light duty vehicles and a similar light regulatory construct has contributed to the availability that we see today of electric vehicles being offered for sale, passenger vehicles here in the state. So as we may

continue progress in the passenger vehicles, now is the time for us to have these tools for even heavy duty, which will become an increasingly, you know, take up more and more of the share of the remaining NOx and greenhouse gas emissions associated with mobile sources.

And then at the same time, we're also continuing our work to advocate with respect to upwind states to address pollution that, you know, air pollution that's coming across our border. So, we have to have kind of a full suite of strategies to tackle this. That's the only way for us to, you know, make progress to, you know, to begin to be able to meet the EPA standards and provide for cleaner air for families and for our kids here in the state.

So that's one of the reasons why this is a -- this is so important. I think that the targets that we have in terms of 2030, 2050, you know, reflect our forecast that we're carefully considering, again, this is the benefit of working with so many other states and participating in the California program.

I had the opportunity to testify before the California Air Resources Board last summer. And I know our staff have been very engaged with them as they've been putting together their proposal, which we would be evaluating and would follow if that evaluation proves out under this Bill. And so, you know, the key is balancing the opportunities for making, you know, significant progress as quickly as possible on the emissions reductions, balanced with the availability of the technologies, the availability of the vehicles in a manner that's cost effective and affordable for folks to purchase here in the state.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Well, thank you for that Commissioner. If the Committee will just indulge me for a couple more minutes, I do have a question on, or a couple of questions on another Bill, that's 6469 related to soil, and I'm just

curious about with respect to section one, what do we use this soil for now, this lightly contaminated soil? And I will ask also a follow-up question to that, which is what does lightly contaminated mean?

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: I'll turn to our Bureau Chief Graham Stevens to help address those questions.

GRAHAM STEVENS: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you for the question Senator. So, this Bill and section one in particular, dealing with lightly contaminated soils and some other materials is really meant to address a waste management issue. So, one of the things you'll see in the Bill is that it is meant to specify that the soils already meets standards specified in the remediation standard regulations. That's the Bill is referenced to regulations promulgated pursuant to 22a. And in our testimony, we're seeking just a clarification that relates to regulations promulgated pursuant to 22a 133k.

So, these soils are not soils that we would find to be polluted or posing a risk to public health or the environment. But when certain parties do a construction project and generate excess soils, they need to find a place to dispose of, or finally place those soils. Many times, because there's not a great system for dealing with these soils, they end up being trucked out of state and landfilled. And we know from our own experience in Connecticut that the landfills should be, and the space in the landfills should be reserved for the waste that needed to go there as opposed to soils that might be used for other purposes on other properties.

So, the concept with this Bill is to work through a pilot program to see if we can establish a process using existing lenses that we apply to these issues to find a beneficial reuse for these soils or other materials in a way that's not going to impact our waterways, in a way that's not going to impact public health and in a way that's going to be

protective and provide additional opportunities for economic development.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So, these soils are tested to make sure they meet the standard of lightly contaminated and don't pose a risk to public health or the environment.

GRAHAM STEVENS: Correct. And there's other factors, however, that needs to be weighed for instance, you know, the chemical properties or the pH of the soil needs to be -- needs to be such, so it doesn't leach naturally occurring metals out of the soils that are in place. They need to be placed in a way where erosion is not an issue, that might impact our waterways. So, there's a lot of other factors that go into it other than just the testing for the contaminants. But certainly, the testing for the contaminants would be a requirement if a site were selected.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thanks for that. And in the same Bill, section six, with respect to dredging, you know, we have experienced this horrific timeline with permitting processes, you know, and, you know, areas, clubs and whatnot, trying to get permitted, you know, to open up a season expeditiously. Unfortunately, that doesn't always happen, but much of what we're running into, at least in my area is that it's a delay with the Army Corps of Engineers. So, I'm wondering if you could comment a bit on section six, and really if DEEP is able to impasse at all that permitting process timeline.

GRAHAM STEVENS: So, I'm going to ask Brian Thompson to see if he can provide you with some more details, Senator, on that question.

BRIAN THOMPSON: Surely. Thanks Graham. And Senator, yes. Yeah, we definitely understand the frustration that applicants can feel in the process that leads up to submitting an application and, you know, it's a process of characterizing the sediment before it's

approved for disposal at Save the Sound disposable sites. So, it's helping a sampling plan and getting that approved and then collecting data and doing analysis. And then the Army Corps of Engineers goes through a process of what they call sediment suitability determination. They do that in conjunction with EPA and DEEP, but it's really led by the Army Corps.

And it really is a critical function or -- that we need to make sure we do comprehensively and carefully because, you know, as we know, New York has been pushing back on Connecticut's use of open water disposal sites in Long Island Sound. They challenge our use of those sites and so we need to very carefully characterize and review the sediment quality before approving of the disposal at those locations. So, you know, it is a very so prescribed process and we do work with the Army Corps closely on it. They have within the last two years made a change in how they do that characterization. So, there was kind of a transfer or change over in the process that I think took a little while for them to figure it out. And they've also had some organizational changes. So, they've had some backlog and delays in some projects.

And it it's pretty variable. It can be -- you know, for some projects it can be months for projects that are very complex. It can be, you know, more than a year, sometimes two years to get through that process. So, we have been working with them. We've been trying to iron out some of the problems. We'll continue to do so. But as I said it is important that we ensure that the process is done carefully.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So, it does sound though that like DEEP can work collaboratively with the Army Corps to come up with perhaps a more streamlined process here and potentially impact timeline.

BRIAN THOMPSON: We can, yes, we can do that. As I said, we have been working with them for some time

and it also involves EPA as well. So, we need to make sure all three agencies are working in hand. and I think all the agencies recognize that there have been some issues in trying to work through those. So, I'm hopeful that it will get -- it will move faster as we go forward.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Thank you. And I just want to thank the Committee for their indulgence of me taking up so much time with my questions. I see. Senator Miner is next, followed by Representative Piscopo.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. Again, I would ask there are a number of Bills here that I think we need to try and get right as a Committee and the DEEP staff is clearly put a lot of thought into how we might best get there. I'm not sure we're going to be able to absorb it all today. I have questions on the ability pertaining to radiation security. I have questions on 6501 with regard to permits that were required. We required people to register diversions. It appears to me that now there'll be a fee. So once again, I would just ask that we try and schedule an opportunity for at least the leadership of the Committee to ask questions directly maybe we can do it via Zoom before we try and move these Bills,

They're all intended to do good work for the state. I just want to make sure that that's where we are before we try and vote in my other Committee. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Senator, for those comments. Representatives Piscopo, followed by Representative Dillon.

REP. PISCOPO (76TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you Commissioner for your testimony. I appreciate it. On the emissions Bill 931, I assume that the effort here is to shift a regulation of emissions from the federal government to the

California standard for medium and heavy duty trucks. that's a safe assumption. and please correct me if I'm wrong, but toward the end of the Bill, it mentions that we will have to, I think the wording is something like from time to time as California amends its regulations, SO say they wanted to say tighten up on some of the emission standards. Does Connecticut automatically follow that procedure or will it come before our Legislature or this Committee and then the Legislature to adopt those so-called or whatever the amended -- amendments are to those regulations. I think --

TRACY BABBIDGE: Commissioner, I'm happy to take that if it makes sense.

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: Please so.

TRACY BABBIDGE: Thank you, Representative Piscopo for the question. And the first part in response to your question about EPA versus California. We've been looking at this very, very closely. EPA has been talking about proposing regulations in this space since 2018, but no proposal has been forthcoming as of yet. We do think that under the new administration, it will get, you know, more attention, but it's going to take a fair amount of time before there is a proposal at the federal level. California, as we have seen on the passenger vehicle side is much more nimble and adept at responding to technology changes and incorporating those changes in their requirement.

So, the California approach will provide a better and better -- better and better environmental outcomes and we'll focus more on the advanced technology options for medium and heavy duty as we see right now. California's rules will be effective for the 2024 model year. At this point in time, we don't know when EPA will have a regulation or a rule in place, but it's probably looking more like beyond the 2028 timeframe.

So just to give you a perspective and as, you know, Commissioner Dykes outlined, you know, Connecticut is non-attainment for ozone. And one of the reasons why we were so interested in pursuing this proposal is that we exceed the ozone standard close to two dozen days in the summer. We have some of the worst, if not the worst air quality on the east coast. And our team at DEEP is sending out a public health forecast close to 20 days during the summer where we're telling our citizens that it's unhealthy to breathe our air. So, we really need a suite of requirements that help us to address the ozone problem in the short term. And that's why we're looking, you know, and interested in the California approach as compared to the federal approach.

Your question with regard to the regulatory process any changes that California makes from time to time, we will go through our regulatory adoption process, the full opportunity for putting the proposal out a notice and comment, and coming back to Reg's review, so that it's not an automatic. As changes get made and refinements get made, we will also need to go back through that process to adopt those enhancement. We will have a requirement to stay current with the California standards. Identicalities is a really important component to this, but we will be going through the Reg adoption process in order to do that. I hope that answers your question.

REP. PISCOPO (76TH): Yes. Thank you, Tracy. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. CARPINO (32ND): Thank you, Representative. Representative Dillon.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm not sure in the protocol that I wanted to follow up on a comment by Brian Thompson, would that be through you to the Commissioner to him or?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Please ask the question, Representative. It sounds like you have a question pertaining to the Bill.

REP. DILLON (92ND): I do, and it would be it's application to a specific case, that could involve a decision by the law, by the Corps of Engineers to put sediment from Eastern Connecticut in a site outside near Morris Cove in New Haven. The dispute - - I actually testified at the hearing against it. And this is going back, I don't know, within five years, I think. But my question is, given that there is an institutional conflict between New York and Connecticut, which probably goes back to my parents' childhood about the use of the common worries. I wonder if you could provide today or later, probably, the application of this Bill to determining the contents of anything that's placed in the Harbor outside of Morris Cove.

BRIAN THOMPSON: Sure, Representative. Yeah, we can perhaps best to talk about that offline, but essentially what's being proposed now by the Army Corps of Engineers is as a part of the New Haven Harbor deepening project to place some of that sediment in the excavation in Morris Cove, in Harbor in Morris Cove. There were a number of other approaches to like using that sediment [inaudible] that is one of them that is actually a habitat improvement by filling that hole and eliminating some water quality and creating a better habitat. Yeah, we can have further discussion about that, I'd be happy too.

REP. DAUPHINAIS (44TH): And that would be great. There was a boy scout troop in West Haven actually that asked me to speak on this. I think they probably all graduated from some Sound School by now, but it was very, very high interest. Anything you can do would be very, very helpful.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. Thank you Representative. I don't see any other hands up. So,

I just want to say thank you to Commissioner Dykes and the Deputy Commissioners and Bureau Chiefs and everyone who joined today. Thank you for your testimony. And it sounds like we'll be having some continued conversation.

CMMR. KATIE DYKES: It's a team effort, Senator. Thank you so much for the time. And we look forward to continue discussion and again, appreciate the Committee raising some of these Bills on our behalf.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Absolutely. Thank you. Moving right along, I think we have Commissioner Hurlburt of the Department of Agriculture with us. Welcome Commissioner.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Good morning, everybody. And I'll try to be as efficient as Commissioner Dykes was with her testimony before everyone here. Senator Cohen, Representative Borer, Senator Miner, Representative Harding, and the honorable Members of the Environment Committee. Thank you for raising three Bills that I'd like to testify on behalf of, today. For the record, my name is Bryan Hurlburt. I'm the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture. And I am joined today by Carole Briggs, the Department of Agriculture Staff Attorney, and Kayleigh Royston, our Legislative Liaison

For your information, I have submitted testimony with regards to HB 6504, AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE. HB 6500, AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPLEMENTAL REVISIONS TO THE STATE'S HEMP PROGRAM STATUTE. And House Bill 6496, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SOIL HEALTH INITIATIVES.

I won't be reading all my testimony, but it will address certain high points, and be willing to answer any questions that you and the Committee Members may have regarding these Bills.

Starting with House Bill 6504, it's a priority of Bill that the agency submitted it and requested to

make substantive policy changes to enhance the department's ability to ensure that domestic animals in our state are properly cared for and that the department has the tools necessary to enforce these best practices. Section one updates to the term animal to remove the outdated term brute creature. And it's not intended to revise or narrow the scope of the department's authorities, or an animal control officers duties. I do understand that there was concern from some of the animal welfare community that this language about this language change and I will add that we are currently working with them to address their concerns with regards to the definition in our statutes.

The Bill also contains updated definitional changes to animal control officers and domestic animals to bring us in line with current federal language, including updated definitions for service animals, which adds service animals and training in that language.

Section three contains definitional changes, which reflect the department's mission to protect domestic animals and to affect changes requesting to remove guide dogs and replace with service animal, which aligns our statutes with the terms used by the federal law and the ADA.

Sections four, five and eight, we are requesting the words Chief Animal Control Officer, any animal control officer or any municipal or regional control officer be replaced for references to the appropriate statutes, authorizing the appointments of said animal control officers.

Section six allows municipalities to create mutual aid agreements for assignment of animal control officers on a temporary basis of their own. This would put in -- would allow the practice that is currently happening in the community to be aligned with our statutes.

Section nine requires animal importers to have dogs and cats examined by a veterinarian within 48 hours of entering the state and being available for sale.

section 12 was not submitted by the department, but we understand where the Committee and the advocates are looking to go with this proposal regarding rabies quarantines. And we are currently in discussion with the humane society to work out a provision that would be an agreement with our sister agencies to clarify and provide the flexibility that sought in this language. Just for the Committee's knowledge this, the compendium regarding animal rabies prevention and control includes both the Department of Public Health and the Department of Energy Environmental Protection. So, this is not a unilateral measure that we can take.

Sections 13 and 14 increase the reimbursement payments for veterinarians to spay and neuter pets, and increase the funding limit for the Feral Cat Program. This is a really important change that we're requesting. In the past three years, 22 veterinarians have dropped out of the program or have indicated that they are disinclined to continue because of the low reimbursement rate. And just for the Committee's knowledge other veterinarian has left the program just in this past week.

The department also requested two sections that were not included in the raised Bill that would allow for the opportunity to create a mediation session for restraint and disposal orders and updating rabies reporting requirements.

Moving along to House Bill 6500, AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPLEMENTAL REVISIONS TO THE STATE'S HEMP PROGRAM. Prior to starting my comments, I'd just like to first extend my thanks to you and all the Members of the Legislature for the amendments made to the State's Hemp Program that were passed during the special session last September. Those brought us in

compliance with the USDA Hemp interim final rules to maintain an eligible state program.

Last month, USDA released the final rules for hemp production and after our thorough review and working with the USDA, our sister agencies and the federal partners, we have drafted the suitable language before you to bring us in compliance with those final rules. The Bill contains technical revisions due to numbering and language changes that the USDA final rules have versus what was contained in the interim final rules. The numbering for sampling and testing was changed in the final rule, and our statutes need to be renumbered accordingly.

Section two allows for the remediation of non-compliant crops. Section three clarifies the restrictions on eligible licensees by specifying a ten-year conviction period. This change was at the request of the USDA. This language that has been submitted and that you are considering today has been submitted to the USDA for their approval. And we would ask that this Bill move forward in tact to prevent any unnecessary delays, which could be caused by additional revisions.

We're requesting for this Bill and any of our Bills, that we update the citation authority under 51-164 to incorporate all previously authorized statutory citation references. it's not currently in the Bill. we would request that to be added as substitute language if any consideration for the Bill or this language is taken up to grant us this authority. The enforcement language that we've requested is identical to the language for hemp manufacturers regulated by the Department of Consumer Protection, 51-164N, the citation statute has not been amended to reference 22-61L. And without those changes, USDA may decide that our proposed hemp law does not meet the final rule requirements and may not approve our state plan which is why it's important that we get that language in this Bill or one of the other Bills that the Committee sees fit.

A little asterisk on our language and in the conversation here, as with any proposed proposal regarding hemp. We are at the mercy of the USDA for final guidance. In our recent discussions with the Director of the Hemp Program just last week, the Biden administration and secretary of [inaudible] may keep the rules as proposed. They may revise them, or they may delay implementation. We will keep the Committee posted with any developments as they happen as we understand that this is important to the success of our Hemp Program.

Finally, House Bill 6496, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SOIL HEALTH INITIATIVES. just for the Committee's awareness we have at the Department of Agriculture been participating in and fully engaged IN the Governor's council on climate change. And I Chair the Agriculture Soils Working Group. House Bill 6496 adds the responsibility for soil health to the duties of the counts on soil and water and the conservation districts.

The department does have a seat on the council and the council is instrumental in the development of the Governor's council on climate change report that we released. We do have concerns with section six of the proposed Bill. The proposed streamlining for marine dredging raises a concern for us. Eliminating that requirement would enable dredging with no lot knowledge of what is being dumped in the water or on the land. Should this be permitted near shell fishing areas, particularly town recreational areas, the department asks for more limitations to reduce the transport of contaminants to the shellfish area. The Department Bureau of Agriculture makes a determination of significant impact to shellfish resources and shellfish habitat. And we request that any streamlined process include notification to the department in order to preserve and protect our shellfish industry.

Thank you all for the opportunity to testify on these Bills and I'd be happy to answer any questions from the Members.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Well, Commissioner, I'd say you did pretty well, getting through that timely testimony and in an efficient way. I do see some questions from the Members. Representative Dubitsky, followed by Representative Mushinsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you Commissioner for coming in. Kind of a couple of quick questions with regard to raised Bill 6504. In lines four through ten, the redefinition of animal now includes livestock, for my understand for the first time, why was livestock put into the definition of animal? My understanding is there has always been a very distinct and intentional definition, a distinction between the livestock and domestic animals. And I'm a little concerned that this kind of blurs that line. What was the intention there?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Thank you, Representative Dubitsky. And I appreciate your attention and concern to that language. It had been our opinion that brute creature would include livestock for the purposes of the animal control officer statutes, and so we were looking to revise the language to make it more clear. There's no real definition of a brute creature. And so, what we did here was we proposed specific language that would incorporate all of the types of animals that had been previously included under our animal control authorization.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I thank you for that answer, but it gets a little bit more complicated when you're looking down at -- so are -- is livestock now a domestic animal or just an animal?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: An animal.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, looking at section, go that lines 262 through 264, it talks about appointment of animal control officers to enforce laws related to, it used to be dogs and other domestic animals, but the word domestic was removed. So, does that now extend that jurisdiction over livestock as well?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: I wouldn't say that it extended it. We have defined animal to include livestock, which was, you know, considered brute creatures previously, and so we're just clarifying - clarifying that animals defined earlier in the statutes and no need to keep domestic in there because that would change what we're referencing throughout the course of the proposed statutes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, it used to relate to dogs and other domestic animals of which livestock was not. And now it relates to dogs and other animals of which livestock is. Doesn't that extend the jurisdiction?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: I would disagree with that. Animal control officers have previously and continue to investigate and work with the state Department of Agriculture on domestic and livestock issues. There's a case that received a lot of publicity just recently regarding horses that was in a partnership with the local ACOs. So, I don't think it is an expansion in practice, considering the work that we've done.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, looking down at line 360 where it does the same thing, it removes the word domestic, and arguably now includes lifestyle. And then you go down to line 364, and the word domestic is not removed. So, if livestock is not a domestic animal, but it is an animal, does the leaving the word domestic in here exclude livestock?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Representative, that's a great question and our Staff Attorney Carole Briggs is offered to respond.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

CAROLE BRIGGS: Representative Dubitsky, our proposed language did eliminate the word domestic from the phrase domestic animal, because the defined term and statute under 22-327 is animal. So, we were trying to make the references in our ACO statute to refer to animal. we did remove the word domestic when it got raised as the Bill by the Committee, the word domestic got left in a number of places, that was not what our language was as proposed. So, we wanted the word domestic removed, so that only the word animal was used throughout that statute.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I'm sorry, you're telling me this is a typo.

CAROLE BRIGGS: I'm being diplomatic, Representative.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. The diplomatic way to say there's a typo in here.

CAROLE BRIGGS: Yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, it seems to be several of them because the word domestic is left in several lines including line 368 and there are others, 379, 383. So, it makes it difficult to determine where the jurisdiction lies if you're trying to incorporate livestock into the definition of animal, but it's not a domestic animal, and then in some places it refers to domestic animals and other places it refers to animals. I think that would certainly need to be clarified in my view, because as it stands, I don't understand whether they're in or they're out.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: It would be our preference Representative to remove domestic throughout the proposed language.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Do you have any idea if that was intentionally left in by LCO or anybody else?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: I can't answer that. I'm sorry.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I just be interested if there was a reason why it was left in. You know, I apologize I can't cite your line number, but it is my reading through this, I forgot to put a note in a particular place, that the -- under current law, it is legal for a farmer, for instance, to humanely euthanize an animal who is injured or suffering in some way. My quick read of this Bill seems to remove that right from the farmer and indicate that the euthanization must be done by a veterinarian. Is that -- is that -- did I read that correctly?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: I don't believe that we referenced the farmers' ability or inability in this. This statute references the animal control officer's responsibilities and I'll allow Carole to add or anything to that comment.

CAROLE BRIGGS: Representative, we're still not impacting the farmer's ability to handle their livestock, you know, in the way that they normally would much like if they're raising beef for slaughter, they're raising poultry for slaughter or for whatever it might be there. And if they're handling their animals, they're still allowed to do that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. All right. it just -- and again, I didn't put in a note anywhere, but it just -- it appeared to me that it took all the powers to euthanize an animal and assign it exclusively to veterinarians. If that's not the

intent, then I guess I read it wrong and I appreciate your response.

I think that's all I have on this Bill. I'll continue to listen the debate and I mean, to the testimony. If I have any other questions, I'll chime in. Thank you very much, I appreciate it. Thank you. Madam Chair.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Representative Mushinsky, followed by Representative Borer.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. So, Commissioner, good morning.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Good morning.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): I have two questions on the animal welfare Bill. First on the spay and neuter. It does make sense to -- it does make sense to change the vet fees, so the vets will stay in the program. But what we do now is we wait until they drop out of the program and then we change the law and update the fees. Wouldn't it make more sense to peg in the law to peg what we pay to some published schedule of vet fees so that we continuously update the law rather than do it once every 10 or 15 years?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: I would be happy to consider that and make sure that we had all the appropriate public notice and everything. I think your goal is our goal, which is to make sure that veterinarians are being reimbursed at an adequate level to provide the services. So, I'm not immediately opposed to that, but I want to make sure we do it appropriately.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Okay. I just wanna avoid this cycle of that's gradually dropping out of the program until it becomes constricted and then we

have to rush and fix it. So, I'd like to avoid that if possible and keep the program smoothly running.

And then my other question is the same one I asked you last year about you've got some language in here on working dogs, and I'm trying to give some credit to the therapy dogs that go in and work with the public. And would you be willing to -- would you be willing to accept language that the Commissioner may issue some kind of a badge or identification for working therapy dogs and then the owner of the dog would then pay the department a fee for the badge?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: I am interested in that. Carole has been participating in the Human Services Subcommittee that has been working on this. Carole, are there any issues with that? I don't fully remember what the federal law is regarding state requirements on service animals and therapy animals.

CAROLE BRIGGS: I think that's one of the issues is that therapy animal is not a defined term in any federal law. A couple of states, I believe have taken steps to create such a category. But right now, we were focusing on the service animals because that is a defined term under the Americans with Disabilities Act. And we could easily handle that change in our statutes. I think it's certainly something we could -- we could certainly continue to work on.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Okay. So, not during this hearing, but later this week, Carole, I probably should talk to you directly.

CAROLE BRIGGS: Sure.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): And see if we can, maybe we can use the New York definition. They've already got one and that would make it easier to write for Connecticut. Okay. Thank you, Commissioner.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative.
Representative Borer.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. Thank you, Commissioner. You had mentioned that you were working with some animal advocates on the definition of animal and animal welfare, and we've just heard a little bit confusion over the technical definition, which it sounds like we need to take back and look at what was intent versus what was an inadvertent typo. So, can you clarify what the intent is on feral cats?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: The intent is to include feral cats as we have previously.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. All right. So, I'm not sure that the language is clear around that. So, that is something that we'll take back and we'll revisit after we hear all of the testimony today. Thank you.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Yup. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative.
Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chairman. So, I guess, first of all, I'd like to align my concerns with those expressed by Representative Dubitsky and I look forward to maybe another conversation to try and allay some of those concerns. I think -- I think I'll leave it there for today, but at least with respect to that issue, I want to go to the section that has to do with kind of aligning facilities. Section, I think, where that is, where we talk about regional control officers, animal shelters and all of that, that's in the Bill. Looks like section nine.

But what is the hope, I guess, of the new language? What's the intention here? Is it to require animal

shelters to come up to a certain standard of housing, so to speak?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Senator, I just want to make sure I'm looking at the appropriate language. You said section nine, section nine is animal importers, but there is another section regarding pounds is regional, regional animal pounds. Is that? I just want to make sure I'm looking at the record.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): So, there are a couple of sections here.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Section seven, I'm sorry, is the regional pounds.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): There are a couple of -- there are a couple of sections here where I think the agency is attempting to improve the quality, let's say of life and the handling of animals when they come into the state with regard to physical structure. Is there anything in here that would require an upgrade of facility?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: So, section seven would require that regional pounds match the requirements of a municipal pounds with regards to construction maintenance and sanitation standards. The language that is current statute hadn't been updated with the number of regional pounds that have been happening, the mutual aid agreements between communities to share ACOs and facilities. And this would just make sure that if a town uses a regional facility, that it meets the same requirements that a municipal, an individual municipality would have to be held to.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): And so, with respect to private non-profit shelters and rescues, the agency doesn't feel the same way about the obligation to upgrade those as well. I know the news over the last year or two has been inclusive of a number of violations that the local ACO or the agency may have felt were inappropriate. Is there a reason why there

was no effort, I guess, in the Bill to bring them up to the same standards we're requiring for municipality?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: They are currently regulated in a different section of statute and we also have some Regs being proposed and drafted that will address some of these issues that you should be seeing in the near term.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): And lastly, I got to tell you that I'm continuing to hear from constituents that are adopting dogs from outside the state of Connecticut. Some are being delivered here to Connecticut. Some are being delivered craftily to State's adjacent to the state of Connecticut and people are incurring thousands of dollars of medical expenses for dogs, particularly, but some cats and dogs, is there anything in here that changes the state's authority to investigate those types of things? And is the agency doing anything to rectify kind of a lemon law approach to what I think most people enter into, especially during COVID for all the best of reasons. You know, I think we all heard that animals were not available at local municipal pounds and therefore they'd gone to the internet and it's frankly heart-wrenching to hear people talk about thousands of dollars on a credit card in the hopes of keeping an animal. They had no idea was as sick as it was, 'cause you buy them kind of site on scene.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Thank you, Senator. Yeah. Section nine specifically addresses that and it would require a veterinary inspection within 48 hours of entering the state. if the transaction is made outside of the state, I don't believe that we have any authority there. But if an animal is brought in, this would align with our pet shops and other animal importers, that they have to have a certificate of health from a veterinarian stating that the animals are in good enough health for transfer.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): And if it's determined --the last thing. You know, if it's determined that the veterinarian is unwilling to provide such a certificate, what's contemplated then in the Bill?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Arguably the animal could not be transferred without that and whoever is importing it or is responsible for would have to hold on to the animal until the animal's proper health that that would warrant the certificate.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Well, I don't -- I don't want to, I guess, go on forever here, but so if Senator Cohen, for instance, adopts a dog from outside the state, this if approved would it require that she takes the dog to the veterinarian and the dog receive a suitable certificate. She's already got possession of the dog.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: I believe the language specifically requires that it is the person responsible for bringing the animal into the state be examined, have the animal examined by a vet and that could be done at a site, you know, not necessarily at the veterinarian's office, but at whatever site that the transfer's happening. It's not the intent that it's on the consumer to get that certificate.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Senator. I do have a couple of questions. So, you mentioned the Feral Cat Program, obviously we're losing a lot of veterinarians, and presumably they're telling you that it is because of the fee, and as such, we are assuming that by raising this fee that these vets will come back into the program. Is that the assumption?

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Yeah, Senator, we actually maintained the animal population control working group through 2019 and early into 2020. And this had been one of their regular recommendations. I believe the working group started in 2017 or 2018 prior to my coming on board, but this has regularly been one of the recommendations and the working group does include two veterinarians, who have expressed their concern about the challenges with the low reimbursement.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Yeah. And I think Representative Mushinsky had an interesting thought and so maybe we could explore that a little bit further as we move forward. Also, in the same Bill with respect to shortening the quarantine time, I, you know, heard your testimony and see your written testimony, you know, indicating that you don't think this language is necessary. I would just ask you Commissioner, you know, I understand that the state that has the authority to issue waivers to shorten that quarantine, how often is that done? Because it's my understanding that these folks don't necessarily recognize there is a process by which they could or through which they could get a waiver.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: That is a great question, Senator. And we did ask to have that information available for today. Unfortunately, our state veterinarian position is vacant and Dr. Bruce Sherman, the Bureau Director is acting as a state vet, and so I can get you that information as soon as possible, but I don't have it for me right now.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. All right. Well, I would -- I would like to see that going forward. So, thank you so much for your time today. I don't see any other questions, so I appreciate it with you all being there.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: All right. Well, thank you all very much, and we'll be in touch with follow up answers to those questions.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Great. Thank you.

CMMR. BRYAN HURLBURT: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So, moving right along, we are up to Representative Irene Haines. Representative, there you are. Welcome Representative.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Good morning, everyone. So glad to be here. Co-Chair Senator Cohen and Rep. Borer, Ranking Members, Senator Miner and Representative Harding. I'm here today to address Bill 6502, specifically section four. Previous law prohibits 10 or more balloons to be released in the atmosphere. And today I'm here to address the nine or less balloons, we are still releasing. For the same reasons as the previous law was passed, there are a number of reasons and I'll briefly go through them as to why that Bill was, or that law was passed and why the charge of mine here to increase the number of balloons we should be releasing or I'm sorry to decrease the number of balloons we should be releasing.

First and foremost, we've all seen the awful pictures of how injuries to wildlife is prevalent with these balloons. We've all seen the ugly pictures of turtles eating the plastic or birds, having strings wrapped around their bills as they starve and have a very slow, angry death. Infrastructure interference as the strings get caught in power lines and other infrastructure fires ensue and power outages ensue. Therefore, constantly repairs and loss of, you know, all kinds of property, whether it's state property or personal property.

And finally, something of a particular interest to me is injuries to people who could be seriously injured, and I've cited this before, when this Bill is before the Legislature two years ago, was that

the jet ski example. A balloon actually got caught as it floats along the waterway particularly in Connecticut river and it got caught up in the intake of the jet ski and the jet-ski immediately stopped after doing 40 miles an hour down the river. And the passengers, the husband and wife and team got thrown from the jet ski and were very seriously injured. So, these are reasons why this literal trash that we release into the atmosphere eventually comes down and causes all kinds of problems.

This Bill was passed two years ago through the House. Thank you so much to my legislative buddies there. But it is human trash and we need to prevent this from day one in its entirety. Nine balloons or less are still a problem and I appreciate that, you know, you guys are hearing this Bill again, and there are many other people coming up and testifying against this. And I hope that we can get this through Committee this time, through the House, through the Senate and to the Governor, you know, once and for all, just to get rid of this trash entirely. So, I welcome to answer any questions that you have, but I'm sure you all feel the same way as I do. And I thank you again.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. And I just want to thank you for your leadership on this. I know you were responsible for introducing the Bill two years ago and, you know, I too would like to see it cross the proverbial finish line. I told the story and I believe a couple of years ago, and I, you know, posted this on social media as well, you know, [inaudible] the wonderful osprey cams, you know, on osprey nests and it was horrific to watch an osprey, you know, was entangled in front of that helium balloons and, you know, so the thought of, you know, how that osprey was going to tear loose, but that, you know, died for its prey, all of these things within that encumbrance on its talent. So, it was really heartbreaking to see. Luckily that Osprey did break free of the balloon. But this is what's happening all over the place and

you provided some insight, some examples of how human injuries could occur. And also, we just need to be mindful of our environment. So, I'm just grateful for your leadership on that. I see my co-Chair Representative Borer has a question.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. And thank you, Representative Haines. I just wanted to echo my Co-Chair's comments and really thank you for your advocacy on this. You've been a strong leader in this area for a few years now. We all know how dangerous and toxic this is in our waterways and our land.

And, you know, I just -- I cringe when I see people celebrating and releasing the helium into the air. And, you know, it's not intentional. I think, you know, often it's -- it's a celebration and they look at it as a, you know, a happy thing to do, but I think it's up to us to really educate, you know, folks throughout Connecticut, that the dangers that it can really cause, and there's many other ways to celebrate occasions. So, I think with this passage, we'll be able to, you know, send that message. Again, I don't know that it's always intentional, it's just, maybe not aware. So, we're bringing this awareness to everyone is a very much appreciated, so thank you.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Yes. Well, thank you. You know, another thing I didn't actually mention that I should is, is that the other part of this is, is that helium is actually a finite element in our world. And helium is used in the medical field where it's really super needed. And we don't need to be wasting it to, you know, release it into the atmosphere. So that's another piece of this as well. So, I thank you for all you folks on the Environment Committee for advocating for this. And I appreciate the support I really do.

Could I take one more moment?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Is it on the same Bill?

REP. HAINES (34TH): It's just to give you guys a heads up that there is somebody who else is going to be testifying coming up very soon. And I just want to introduce and support her testimony.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Absolutely.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Okay. My --

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): We'll keep her in order Representative, so signed up to testify, but please, you're welcome to say a few words and introduction of her testimony at a later time today.

REP. HAINES (34TH): Great. So, my esteemed East Haddam Town Clerk will be speaking on the animal welfare Bill and she is coming up in five people. I've gone over her testimony with her and very supportive of the testimony and she has some real great information in regards to just clarifying some language in there. So, I appreciate your listening to her and I give her kudos for speaking as I do all my constituents. It's so important to come up here and testify. That's why we're all here and we need to listen to our public. So, thank you. Thank you all for today.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. I really appreciate it. And it's really never been easier to testify. So, I am so appreciative also of hearing the voices of all the residents of Connecticut on these important matters. I was remising in saying that, you know, as we've gone past the agencies at this point, you know, there are time limits on testimony, so I don't want to catch anybody off guard. The time limit is three minutes. Our Clerk will be keeping time and you'll likely hear a bell or a polite interruption once your testimony has reached that three minutes time mark, and we'll just politely ask you to wrap up at

that point. So, I did just want to mention that as we move forward.

And next on my list here is Representative Anne Hughes. Welcome representative. Are you with us?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: No, Representative Anne Hughes is not. So, we'll just move on to the next one.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Then, Representative Fiorello. I see you here. Welcome. Representative Fiorello. Hi, welcome, you're up.

REP. FIORELLO (149TH): Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, Madam Chair. I am Representative Fiorello of Greenwich and Stamford. And with your permission, I would like to yield my time to Mr. Dan Martens of Novamont North America as a subject matter expert. I am hoping that he can add substantive information regarding successful food waste composting with minimal contamination. So, thank you very much, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative.

DANIEL MARTENS: Okay. Thank you, Representative for yielding your time and distinguished Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members, thank you for allowing me to testify. I'll be giving testimony on House Bill 6502. So, I just like to say as a 35-year-old Connecticut resident, I have experience in this space on a national, the North American and the local level and I'd like to share my comments on this Bill. I currently hold a list of affiliations, which are listed in my written testimony, so I won't go through them now.

But I would like to specifically address the section five of this Bill. I support mandating all precheck produce bags to be compostable. On the surface, this will greatly change and reduce our state's plastic and carbon footprint. For example, a compostable replacement of the produce bag with a 40% plant-

based content, one for one will lower our state's carbon footprint by 2000 tons. However, this is not the greatest benefit. This legislation will put food scrap collection tools in the hands of residents. This means that everyone can participate, and most impactful for our urban areas where most of the food scraps are, and it allows all economic levels to participate in our state's organic diversion programs. Without a collection bag, people will not participate. This is proven locally, nationally, and internationally. Without a compostable bag, micro hauler is so critical to these food scrap diversion programs will have difficulty with curbside programs and composters will have to contend with microplastics.

This legislation supports getting food scraps from the kitchen to the processor. This logic is in line with international legislation and today only compostable produce bags are allowed in the following countries; France, Spain, Austria, Italy, others, and the cities closer to home; San Francisco, Mexico City and others. This is very progressive environmental legislation. Connecticut would be the first state to pass it, certainly, showing environmental leadership for the history books. However, it cannot be passed without amending the certification requirements. These are as written are national and internationally unrecognized as standard methods. It would undo 25 years of standardization efforts, rolling the clock back to say 1995.

Please amend it to the labeling and the testing methods as published in the strictest legislation from my legislation on Washington State, California and Maryland, requiring certifications to ASTM D6400 and international TUV home compostable regulations. In addition, mandating that compostable produce bags can only be green or brown in color, and all other traditional bags cannot be those colors. There is no reason for plastic bags to be colored green. This

will streamline sorting and composting operations, limiting contaminations in the overall process.

And I say, thank you very much for letting me to testify. I beat the buzzer.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You did. Well done, Mr. Martens. Thank you for being with us today. I would just ask if there is a reason why we think, and I'm just curious about this, plastic produce bags need to be used at all. I mean, at this point, obviously, you know, this was something of a habit and tradition that we have across the nation, and I'm curious from your standpoint if you believe it's something that's necessary, a habit that was die hard. If we didn't have these produce bags at all, and also if you're aware of any places that use a paper in its place, and I know that paper has some of the serious environmental concerns along with it as well.

DANIEL MARTENS: Yes, what I would direct is look at the EU single use products legislation, single use products legislation at the European level, not country level exempts produce bags as far as a single use item. What they do is they would agree to using them as a compostable product as opposed to plastic. This is why the legislation of Europe has gone this way. And the reason they do this is because they are used for food scrap collections. It's a very simple tool. it can be used, you know, by anybody, it's inexpensive.

However, it does not prohibit people from bringing their own like debt bag if they'd like to use that or from stores using paper bag because the legislations are so restrictive, even the states they say must be a compostable bag. And under that paper bags do qualify as well. That's up to a grocery store to decide, it's not as practical. It's kind of going backwards, but that's the legislation. So, it's -- you get -- you don't take tools out of the hands of people for collecting food scraps,

especially the low-income folks in the urban areas where all of the food scraps are that you want to get. And urban areas have a lot of problems as far as collecting, but you're not prohibiting people either who are in other areas who don't want to use any bag and they have the choice not to take them. Did I answer your question? Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yes, it did. Thank you. And could you just enlighten us, the Committee as to a cost differential between the typical plastic produce bag in the grocery stores, and I'm talking about grocery store costs, right now the grocery stores currently have their produce and often need sections as opposed to a compostable bag that your company produces.

DANIEL MARTENS: Well, yes. And of course, we don't produce the bags. We're actually the biopolymer manufacturer. So, I can't speak for market conditions, but as a good general rule of thumb, you would say at least two times, possibly three. So, that's the difference of the cost for a produce bag and you know, like, so that would be up to all the different companies around, that would make them.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. And are there currently grocery stores in the State of Connecticut that are using these bags?

DANIEL MARTENS: Yes. The first, well, actually there's a lot of health food stores and different small stores that use them. But the major chain that you would recognize in across the country would be Trader Joe's. Trader Joe's put a non-plastic and a produce bag, sorry, Compostable bags only based out of legislation that came out of Brookline, Mass that then also influenced San Francisco to pass the same ordinance last fall to a Committee of 10 to zero from their Environmental Committee. So, they were very proud of that. So yes, the stores play a part as well.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I want to know, and I thank the Committee again for their indulgence, but one of the concerns around plastic bags is, you know, the impacts on our environment, and what that does -- what they do for our, or to our wildlife, for instance. And I'm not sure that composability solves for that totally. Right. Because if compostable bag falls in the water, for example, how quickly does that compostable bag break down? And if it's not breaking down immediately, is there not still the opportunity for our wildlife to be entangled, our marine life to be entangled, you know, in these that, you know, we were just talking about helium balloons, are there not those same opportunities with compostable bags as there are, you know, the typical, typical bags that are currently being used.

DANIEL MARTENS: Yes, there are certainly, certainly, you know, we don't call it litter anymore because litter was something that puts -- put it on people. We call it leakage. But yes, in the environment, if addressing specifically marine, we have tests, we've done studies in Europe. Basically, our material is heavier than water. It has a density of 1.27, so it actually sinks to the bottom. So, it doesn't float on the top. It wouldn't get caught in a boat, but it could happen. This is not absolute. This is why we certainly don't want to have any products released into the environment. As far as the material itself, it's a fairly weak material. It's not a polyolefin plastic. It's not bulletproof, it's not polyethylene. It's really -- it's really made to have a short life span, to which it starts breaking down in the environment.

So, is it less potential to choke a marine life five years from now, 10 years from now? Yes. But does that mean that we should throw it anywhere it doesn't belong? No. That's why for it being used for food scrap collections. It's for a specific use. It has a very end of life. You know, this stuff has been very vetted throughout the world. Like I said, Spain has a lot of coastline. France has a lot of

coastline. Then, San Francisco is the city by the Bay. It's been really looked at by greater minds than me, but yes, you certainly don't want anything to escape into the environment. But it won't last for long. In the ocean, it will be four to eight months or so.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Four to eight months. And what's the breakdown period on land?

DANIEL MARTENS: Well, the way the materials work is they have to basically be in touch with microbes in order for them to be eaten. So, if they would basically in the environment, there's articles on this, it shows us short as like three months, you're stuck in a tree, but I actually have one, you know, by my home compost pile that I've been watching and it gets really frail and really breaks down in several months.

But the international soil biodegradation survey says that with a survey standard says that within two years, this is for agricultural mulch film where they're actually laying it on the soil. EN 17033 says that all particles must be going within two years.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. I appreciate your testimony. I see there's lots of hands up here. Representative Michel, followed by Representative Mushinsky.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Dan for testing today. I appreciate the fact that you're saying it shouldn't be a releasing the environment, one of the -- I have some experience with marine life protection and some of the marine life actually eats the garbage or the plastic bags thinking they're jellyfish. So that certainly doesn't solve that problem, the composting, because several months in an esophagus doesn't save the marine life or keystone species.

How -- you did say -- how many months did you say it takes to break down in the ocean?

DANIEL MARTENS: Well, the studies that were done by the Hydro Foundation is Christopher Lott. Like you follow marine plastics you'll know his name off the Island of Corsica. They found that the shortest, the shortest term was four months and the longest was eight months. So, basically, you know, the product will sink to the bottom and at the bottom at the ocean, it gets eaten by microbes, just like a dead fish would be eaten or an onion skin. It's viewed as food.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Right. I mean, yeah, and so I guess I did mention that marine life will also eat it not micros, bigger life, bigger than the plastic bag. Do the countries, you mentioned earlier, have national curbside composting services to collect the waste?

DANIEL MARTENS: It varies by country. for example, Italy is the most, has the best, you know, mostly Northern Italy does. Austria does. France has an infrastructure that's more home composting. So, for them they're very important that they have home compostable certification for all the produce bags. They also have carbon goals, so France requires 50% plant-based content. Italy does. Spain does not. Austria is at 40.

So, it really depends on what the goals and the infrastructure is for the country as to the most appropriate product, but they all use the base of the same compostable standards.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Representative Mushinsky, followed by Representative Borer.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Hi, Mr. Martens.

DANIEL MARTENS: Good morning.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): I wanted to ask you, don't the composting services give out the compostable bags when you are part of their service territory.

DANIEL MARTENS: it depends some of them do, some of them do not. It just depends now for subscription services where you're actually paying. They usually do supply bags, at least the ones that I know here in Connecticut. But if you're trying to get at mass participation food scrap collection, which would be needed to get to the 500,000 tons of food scraps we have, you have to put tools in the hands of the people.

Now produce bags are fairly thin. They're like leaves. They really are. You know, they break down very quickly, but they're good for in a spot. Or if you have the wherewithal to go buy a box of say, you know, like a bio bag at 20, you could still do that. You can still get your favorite compostable bag or have them supplied, but you need to supply tools readily easily and the hand, because if you don't have a way to collect the food scraps and take it to the curb or to your collection bin, they'll go in the trash.

And that's just -- and that's not my opinion. That's just from almost three decades of this happening throughout Europe and the United States that people won't participate if they don't have a tool, and the best tools so far has been a compostable bag.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Okay. Well, my concern obviously is that if you distribute these two households as the floor, then companies like that do now, then you know that that will be used for composting. Whereas if you sell it in the store in the food section of the store and people bring it home, it may or may not be used for composting. It may also end up in hanging from some tree or down in

long Island Sound where it'll be for four months minimum.

DANIEL MARTENS: Yeah.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): So, the other -- the other system seems more controllable to put the bag into use where it will be compostable if you tie it to the composting service, rather than have the consumer bring it home where they may or may not use it for composting. So that's -- that's my hesitation about, you know, just distributing them through the grocery store where they're just another plastic shopping bag to some people who are not composting.

DANIEL MARTENS: Okay. Well, the only thing I say that is that unfortunately, that's one of our problems with scale. The only composting programs that we have are really very limited and they're very -- they're paid services where you have micro haulers bringing bags. This is really, like I said, this is very progressive legislation that looks 10, 20 years down the road. If you look at the DEEP goals, I mean, their plans really look like they're -- they're like ten-year goals. So how do you plan for that? And how do you take plastics out of the environment, but still give people tools for composting? So that's where you have to look, but yes, by today, if you want us to draw that as a line, I could understand that logic.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Okay.

DANIEL MARTENS: I should say, I can agree with that logic. That's better.

REP. MCCARTY (38TH): Okay. I just want the two link together. If they're not linked together, I think we're just adding to the problem. If they are linked together and there is a composting effort going on in the municipality. Okay. Then it would work. But if it's separated and there is no service there,

it's just another plastic bag that ends up the environment. That's what I'm concerned about.

DANIEL MARTENS: Yes. It's, I mean, another conversation would be on bioplastic and compostable materials. It's not just another plastic bag, but I understand your concern.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Representative Borer, followed by Representative Miner. Madam Co-Chair, are you available? All right. Let's move on to Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Good morning for another minute or so. So, section five seems to me to create kind of an obligation to submit information and then have it analyzed. Are the products that you discussed, not only today, but in the past, are those products been bedded previously and is this level of scrutiny, I guess, here in Connecticut going to be advantageous to moving forward with food scrap collections and like?

DANIEL MARTENS: You know, what I would say is, you know, where we are today in Connecticut, you're really -- we're really jumping on the crest of where the rest of the world is after like 20 years of worth of understanding and vetting. The first compostable bag was made 30 years ago. I mean, it's a proven tool for collecting food scraps for composters that works with the whole value chain.

So, this stuff has been looked at upside down and backwards, and all of the very stringent certifications and laws that are put in place should be honored. I mean, we don't need to start reinventing the wheel and going back because you're leaving open latitudes for people to say this with that, the current certifications which I would recommend to follow, like I said, Washington State

law are extremely restrictive and they're also labeling laws.

You need to follow international ISO standards. ASTM standards that based being D6400, then on top of that, you can layer home compostability, then on top, you would layer BPI, which tests for PFAS, and then on top of that, you lay a certification that says, can only be used for food scrap collection. So, you wouldn't certify like a shoe or a rake or something like that. But I'm all for the strictness of when I see this, these parts that I have basically think need to be amended it's because you're going against the rest of the world and even the rest of the state.

And you're going to set a precedent here in Connecticut, although applauded for being the first state to have this progressive legislation to support food scrap, you're going to set a precedent that any community anywhere can set up their own standards and their own groups and then certify to it. And it's going to be an embarrassment, you know, at least, but I think it's dangerous now. I'm very deep into this. And once you call an expert by anyone else, except in Connecticut maybe, but I worked in this for 15 years and I really think that, you know, if we're not ready for food scrap collection to do it right, then we probably should pause and we should wait until we are.

But that's not what I hear from the folks at DEEP and all there seems to be a real enthusiasm for it and I was supported, but let's do it the right way. I mean, really strictly do it the right way. I'm sorry if I got off on the sermonizing, but I hope I answered your question.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Yeah. So, I guess what I've heard the Commissioner of DEEP in the past talk about the importance of getting food scraps out of our MSW and the sheer volume. And if we could achieve that separation perhaps we don't need the

number of waste energy facilities that we have in the State of Connecticut. We could do it another way. We could do it through digesters.

I think one of the benefits of this collection bag is that for those that home compost and don't want to leave the can on their counter even gives them away to do it. And you don't need to worry about whether it's gonna fly off. I mean, I have experimented with these and I can tell you they don't last much longer than the vegetables. I put out my compost pile in them. Why do you think there seems to be such resistance? There isn't a grocery store that I've been in in the last year that doesn't have probably ten or more rollable bags that you kind of pull a single bag off of.

I have seen some that appear to be green. So, I don't know if they fit the qualifications that the product, you're talking about, do. Why is that such a bad idea if we were to make them all compostable as opposed to what we currently have, which I don't believe are necessarily compostable. So, when we talk about a four month deterioration versus some other timeframe, the other timeframe isn't even a part of the conversation, but I suspect it's much longer than four months.

DANIEL MARTENS: Yeah, I agree now for -- I would look at some of the other testimonies. We have US Composting Council, which is testified at, you know, compostable bags will bring food scraps. We have CIC, which is the Italian compost council. They've sent a testimony letter in talking about the use of standards and their legislation for produce bags. New York City also sent in testimony, earth matter on Governors Island, who only will say that they you know, it brings in food scraps, and there's others. So don't let my word carry weight with you talk to composters and talk to people, get the food scraps.

Now, as far as like in stores, this would be part of my Washington state's model regulations, which I

would follow because, yes, there is a problem when you see bags that are green. That's why I said they're plastic. They're polyethylene. Besides the proper labeling and the proper vetting, you need to have something that people who are astute like myself can look at it and go, "Oh, that's this," but you also need people who are not, who are just shopping to have the guarantee that if it's compostable screen it's good. If you're a hauler, you'll open up the bin and you'll look in it. If there's all the green bags in there, it's fine. If it's something else it's not. If you're a composter, they'd dump a load they don't look for little specks of the little things on it. They basically. I'm sorry, logos and things. it's there, but they can look at it and see if it's green we keep it. If not, we reject it.

So again, this is very progressive legislation. It doesn't just force the compostable industry to comply, but it forces the plastics folks to comply, which is just like, you know, they're the ones that need to help us here.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Senator. Representative Borer.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. And thank you, Dan, for your testimony. I'm just -- I've been making notes. So, I just want to clarify a few things if you may, if you will. So, on the colors of the bags, are you saying we need to educate the public or we need to put something on the bags that indicates what type of bag it is?

DANIEL MARTENS: You need to, you need to have all the labeling. This is stuff that's been around for, these labeling laws have been around time. They're not adopted here in Connecticut, but the proper labeling must be there. BPI labeling actually even

gives a certification number that you can go back and track who the manufacturers are and do that. So that's one thing.

Now, the overlay, which is progressive is actually designating a color for compostable bags only, which is green or brown. They're green for compostable and brown for paper because people can still use a paper bag if they like. So, you can educate folks or like they do it where sometimes legislation as much more mandated, just make all the bags that color like San Francisco, they sell all bag, all produce bags have to be green, but they don't allow any other bag. So, it's just, if it's a produce bag and the screen is compostable, so you're actually making it easier.

All this legislation is to help consumers. It's not to help me. It's -- or my company is to help consumers and help composters to take some of the confusion out of this whole thing, which it is confusing and there's a lot of claims and there's a lot of bad actors, composters are trying to think. So, this type of legislation strict as it may be is progressive, but it's necessary if you want to do it in a big way. Now, if you want to do food scrap collection in a very small way, we can just do, you can keep going. That'd be fine, but that's not what I'm hearing.

REP. BOLINSKY (106TH): Okay. Thank you. And then you said that produce bags help collection in the city. What did you mean by that?

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Well, you know, I do a lot of work down in New York City. You know, I worked with DSNY, they had three and a half a million people in their food scrap collection program. You know, the same that we have in the total, Connecticut's population. And it has all in, when you're in inner city, you have space restrictions, you cannot home compost. They have different ways of picking up. You've got to run trucks up and down the streets. And basically, it also has to do with,

terms now use of like environmental justice, injustice, social justice, injustice. If you're out and have the wherewithal, anybody can participate.

However, it tends to be in the urban areas, you have folks of lower income, like I'm working on a project now at NYCHA housing in New York City. For that they have to have tools and they're not necessarily going to pay to go bio box of, I won't say biobag, but I just did, sorry, but that's the way it comes to mind.

So, you have to put tools in people's hands or they won't participate, and they'll basically throw in the trash. So that's why in the urban areas, you know, San Francisco passed this, they'd have 900,000 people in the city. That's more people in the city than we have in Connecticut. And the urban areas are where the people are, the food scraps are where the people are. So, if you don't set up a program to facilitate the urban areas, you will not get the food scraps. However, I'm a home composter. I am a UConn master composter. We can all home compost, but we're going to get about a third of the volume that's out there. So, it's really trying to gauge up to a larger vision and goal of collecting that 500,000 tons.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Thank you. And then one last question. What is your company's name?

DANIEL MARTENS: Novamont.

REP. BORER (115TH): And is your company the only one that makes these bags?

DANIEL MARTENS: No, no. Actually, there's quite a - - you know, the first compostable bag was invented by a woman biochemist Catia Bastioli who did it 31 years ago. She is the CEO of our company. So, we're here in Connecticut. Our CEO is Catia Bastioli. She's an international environmental figure. It'd be great if we still had the original patent for all

this material, but we do not. There are several companies that can make the raw material. I don't know if I have to name them, but in Germany and France. There's Asian companies too that make them, in China. However, the bags can be made locally by any bag manufacturer. So, we just make the biopolymers and that was the Novamont vantage of basically creating these materials that never existed before. But of course, in 30 years they've been replicated. But no, we're not the only ones. On one hand it would be good, but on the other hand, we're stopping food scrap recycling if we were the only ones.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. So, are any of those companies currently working within the United States?

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Yes. Yes. I mean, I'll throw the big gorilla out if you want. We're a small company. I think we're the best. But if you want to call on a BASF at Germany, which is the world's largest chemical company, they'd be happy to sell you some material. So, we're not that we're -- I think we're the best, but there's also Kingfa that sells into the west coast. There are -- there's Kingfa. There's Biotech out of Germany which their biggest customers in France, but they all can come here, but we're collecting food scraps and all of the plastics, so remember, all of bioplastics worldwide. Bioplastics is less than 2% of the plastics industry. It's very small. It's very nichey. And really, unless you're collecting food scraps or doing something on an environmental level, it's -- there's not a lot of place for it. So, you have to wait for environmental things to grow before there's really a place for our products.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay, great. And my questions around the other companies is they, I just want to make sure there was enough competition around the product that, you know, if we were to go forward with something like this, that we were, you know, it

wasn't -- it wasn't about one company. While we appreciate you being here, we want to make sure that there's a market, right, for this?

DANIEL MARTENS: Yes. And I'm concerned about some of the studies that they talk about doing studies, because if you want to look at it a different way, plastic bags would not have to go through these independent studies. And however, it means that every single bag that was going to be sold in the state would have to go through an independent study, us being the leader, I can certainly pass all these tests and pay the fees to go around the internet systems, which will then give me a lock on the state because the other guys would not do it. Connecticut's just too small of a market. So, although I would appreciate your favoritism in the market, unfortunately, capitalism does not allow that.

REP. BORER (115TH): Well, I appreciate your honesty and your transparency. And I appreciate your testimony. You know, I, you know, I say this with every food scrap Bill we discuss it's, you know, to have 25% of our waste be food waste and on the front having food insecurity across our state at levels, in some cases that are higher than the national just does not reconcile for me. And I think we need to do a better job of what we're purchasing and consuming in the first place. Right. So that's just my anecdotal comments, but I do appreciate you being here. Thank you.

DANIEL MARTENS: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Co-Chair. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): I forgot to ask. So, when these bags are digested, what is the residual, is it a -- is it a plastic bead or some fiber that then remains in the environment? Or is it -- what is it?

DANIEL MARTENS: Okay, well, for compostability, for standards, this is why international standards are important. They basically have to be digested like a food source. So, what comes out of it when it's digested is CO₂, what comes out of is biomass, which is basically the residual of the body of the microbe, and then water and that's about it. It's similar to, if you want to think of you eating a donut, okay, you eat a donut, you will energize the donut. You'll have CO₂ coming out of your nose. You'll have other material come out of the other side and that's what's left. And then when you die, your body will be biomass. It's a hundred percent digested.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): I was thinking more on the lines of celery or lettuce, but thank you.

DANIEL MARTENS: I will not judge.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Senator. Mr. Martens, can I just ask one other question? I hear that the bags are in your case are typically made of vegetable. Is that crap?

DANIEL MARTENS: Well, they're not -- they're not made from vegetables, but you can. We try to use plant-based chemicals. So, what they are, they're a combination of alcohols and acids that can be vegetable sourced or, they can be fossil sourced. Now, in our case, for our company, we try to make basically we've invented chemicals from plants that didn't exist before. Now for example, we have products that have 60% plant-based, 30, our competitors have decided not to do that because that's not one of their core pillars of their company to get off of fossil source chemicals.

They don't all exist. Twenty percent of our company is still research and development. So, we're pushing the envelope. And this is why, for example, in France, they started with requiring 20% plant-based, next year had to go to 30 to 40, and now they're up

to 50. So, same thing with Italy and other countries, because they're trying to lower the carbon footprint of these materials of all plastics. And unfortunately, you can't do that with traditional plastics, but it's just another, it's another benefit of working with biomaterials.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So, can you tell me why approximately the percentage of plant-based chemicals that are used in your product as opposed to the fossil-based?

DANIEL MARTENS: Sure. Like I said, it depends, but for commercial, the highest level that we can do commercially is about 50%. We can do that all day long for agricultural mulch film, which they use in Europe. The organics group requires 60%, but in general, I think that everybody could do about 30. So, it really depends on whether the state or the entity wants to push a lowering carbon footprint agenda with these products by forcing a higher just like EPA car regulations for emissions, but that's really -- it just depends on the entity, but yes, we could do more, but that's about it. That's the -- that's the state-of-the-art.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So, they do still, even with, at the 30% standard, they contain those sorts of petro-based chemicals with what you're saying. Like there's really not at this point, there's --

DANIEL MARTENS: Yeah.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): There's not the ability to eliminate those chemicals entirely.

DANIEL MARTENS: Yes. They're -- they're very simple chain carbon molecules. They're a hundred percent compostable. They get beaten by microbes. There are not those same type of petrochemicals that you're thinking that are in plastics. They are not those. They are ones that basically been made through green technology. However, the technology is, is only

where it is. It's state-of-the-art, but one day we hope as a company to have a hundred percent plant-based material, but that technology doesn't exist, although us and I hope other people are also working on it.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You know, I know that they're making strides in hemp manufacturing and you know, hemp plastics. Is this something that's coming on the scene, you know, by way of produce bags do suppose, and if so, would those be 100% plant-based?

DANIEL MARTENS: No, they could not. The technology didn't exist. You have to remember that what we use is the vegetable oils from the plants, from the seeds, even with hemp, they squeeze out the hemp oil and then from that, it's refined into the chemicals that are plant sourced. So, it's a little bit, it's almost unfortunately a like it's hard to say it's made from, because the only way it'd be made from hemp is if you took a hemp plant and you weaved it together and got a produce bag, but you're using is using the oil and then the oil is refined, sunflower oil.

We use the cardoon in Europe, which is a weed. But really, you're getting the oil and then you're breaking down the oil into acids and alcohols. It's a little bit of chemistry, but I don't want to mislead you as well and say, yes, we could do that. But I love the hemp farmers, just so I don't disparage them because they you're a big, big user of our compostable mulch film here at Connecticut and throughout the states, the young guys want to get off the plastic and they really support the industry, so.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Well, I appreciate your testimony, Mr. Martens. It seems to me that the best solution is that people bring their own produce bags, but apparently, we're not there yet in the states. So, we'll be considering these alternatives and I appreciate it.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you very much. And thank you to the Committee.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. And Representative Ann Hughes, welcome. I'm sorry. I -- we didn't see you initially and you got bumped a little bit, but appreciate your patience, welcome.

REP. HUGHES (135TH): Thanks so much. Madam Chairwoman and Ranking Members of the Environment Committee and my esteemed colleagues. I'm here just to basically champion rah-rah in support of SB 62, AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPORTANT TRADE OF THE BIG SIX AFRICAN SPECIES. And also, in support of HB 5030 and HB 5794. And really, I'm urging us to in this moment to face the climate crisis at our doorstep. And that includes all of these are interconnected, right? And to urge the Environment Committee to really take the bold as possible steps to both preserve the biodiversity and that's the big six and ending, you know, trophy hunting in Connecticut and but also sharply curving our climate and carbon emissions.

And I love this conversation about how to policy drive behavior change, right, in the face of this climate. And we aren't really talking about trading convenience and modernizing to face the modern climate crisis at hand. So, both, all of these Bills before you today, you really have a choice of how far to expand these measures to really, to really create urgency to the crisis we're facing, and in lieu of convenience to look at impact-based behavior when we did the plastic bag ban, actually people's behavior change pretty quickly. So, I think you're right. Some of the Members did speaking to the public will around changing behaviors, changing practice to both eliminate carbon emissions and, and food waste and to, -- and again, protect our biodiversity, protect the interconnected habitats of our endangered and threatened species and recognize that, you know, the plastics is as much of a threat as trophy hunting quite frankly. Across the globe

right now, we're all connected and we're all connected by the climate crisis at hand. So, I urge you to take broad and bold action and during the session.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Representative. And just to clarify that a big six Bill is SB 925.

REP. HUGHES (135TH): Oh, did I write that down wrong? Sorry. Thank you. Yes, SB 925. I definitely want to champion that. I think Connecticut public is really ready for that and that's really modernizing, really how we treat this for entertainment and profit and to, you know, restore protecting our wild species and their habitats.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you representative. I don't see any questions from the Committee at this point. So, I appreciate you being with us today and your testimony.

REP. HUGHES (135TH): Thank you very much, Co-Chairwoman. Have a great day.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You as well. All right next up, we have Chris Edge from the Town of Berlin. Welcome.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Thank you so very much. I'm Economic Development Director for the Town of Berlin, advocate of creative reuse of properties, as well as traditional, non-traditional solutions to move communities ahead. I'm speaking today on behalf of Bill 6496.

With the support of this Committee, Governor Malloy and Governor Lamont, the State of Connecticut has invested over \$500 million dollars into brownfield assessment and remediation in the last decade. This has brought many properties from blighted and vacant to vibrant and again paying taxes. This has been a wonderful thing, but with environmental remediation

redevelopment, contaminated soil becomes not just a reality, but what to do with it becomes a major undertaking. Trucking it out of state has become a costly venture and makes some projects untenable.

Bill 6496 would create a pilot program for the reuse of treated soils in industrial and commercial zones. It will provide the State of Connecticut and firms within our state the ability to reuse this soil as fill. This soil again would hit RSR standards within DEEP guidelines and the cost of this treated soil would be much less than clean fill, which at present is the only option to use if you need to raise the level of the projects.

As we said, this Bill is in support of DEEP and is actually one of the Bills that retard priorities for the session. I do want to say thank you so much for our Commissioner Dykes, Graham Stevens, and one of your former associates, James Elvis, who's now up in the Commissioner's office for their hard work on this. This was truly an effort between state government, local government and the private sector, because it is important for all of us consider the investment that the state has made in Berlin.

We've been working with the developer for three years on a few properties, which encompass over 70 acres are industrially zoned, but have over a quarter million dollars in back taxes. This property is unlikely to move in any direction without the assistance of this Bill. This firm has already received approval from Inland Wetlands and our Watercourses Commission, but they need to raise portions of the site to make this work.

This reclaimed and treated soil is a method by which they can make this happen. If this Bill goes forward, we're able to get into it with this particular developer. At the end, we're going to have 15 acres of heavy industrial land on a rail line, almost unheard of in Connecticut will be great for Berlin. I would ask your assistance to move this

legislation to the floor as it will benefit communities throughout the state, not just Berlin.

Soil reuse is a logical additional step that would save money by allowing treated soil to remain here in Connecticut for prevention or, excuse me, beneficial reuse, rather than being shipped out of state. Again, I'm on the local side on the ground. I so appreciate what this Committee has done, and I really hope that 6496 will be something that you'd be interested in supporting and get into the floor.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Mr. Edge for your testimony. It's a really interesting proposal. We started to see it coming together last year and good to see it, you know, before the Committee this year. So, I appreciate your working together with [inaudible] what happens with the process? I don't see any questions from the Committee at this point. So, I appreciate you being here.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: Great. I just want to say one last thing. I just -- I want to say thank you to you, Senator Cohen, as well as Representative Demicco, who was the former Co-Chair, both of you have been tremendous, worked very closely over the last couple of years, and just appreciate your effort and being open to different possibilities, especially when it comes to something like this, which is non-traditional, but hopefully it can be a great benefit to our entire state.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. Appreciate that. Do well.

CHRISTOPHER EDGE: You as well, thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Next, we have Deb Denette with the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, followed by Charles Rothenberger.

DEB DENETTE: Good morning.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Good morning, welcome.

DEB DENETTE: Thank you. Hello to all, Senator Cohen and distinguished Members of the Environmental Committee. I'm a member of the East Haddam or I'm the East Haddam Town Clerk and a member of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association. And I appreciate the opportunity to testify on House Bill 6504, AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE.

Section 10 of this Bill expands the fee exemption for a dog license to the owner of foster family over certain service animal. It's noteworthy that the proposed legislation, specifically removes the reference to dog, which raises concern that licensing of other animals is contemplated either now or in the future. Although, that's not the subject of this testimony.

CTCA supports the intent of this Bill to provide a waiver of the license fee for a service dog utilized to assist its disabled owner as defined in statute. It also suggests significant modifications relative to section 10. Particular, the documentation requirement notated for the temporary placement of a service animal must be expanded to one that's been permanently placed assurance that the licensing is to remain restricted to dogs only.

Please define the term service animals. Is it the intent of the Legislature to require licensing of animals other than dogs that serve in this capacity? State law dictates what town clerks can and cannot do when issuing a dog license. As with a free fishing license, although the customer may indeed have a disability and a doctor's note, the specificity of the law dictates what we can do for issuance.

Please put the same controls in this -- in with 6504. We're worried that clerks would be tasked with arbitrary decisions and those will vary from town to

town. It's my understanding that Connecticut has no recognized certification process or registration list of service animals. It would seem appropriate that the nature and temperament of a service animal must be evaluated prior to having it serve in this capacity. And they would accordingly need to be documentation attesting to same.

Again, this proposed legislation has requirements for the registration of service animal temporarily placed, but not permanently. Well-trained trade service animals are often placed around the globe. Yet, an online certification can be obtained for the fee of \$39.95 on the internet. Is that something the town clerk would need to honor. And additionally, and to be consistent with prior CTCA -- can't talk -- to be consistent with prior Connecticut Town Clerk Association testimony, whenever dog licensing statutes are discussed, we're compelled to point out that the statute that's presently in place as long overdue for an update. However, to amend or expand a flood system is questionable.

Most municipalities report that only a small fraction of the dog population is licensed. The statute is written, continues to punish those who licensed late, but poses no consequence to those that never license at all. We're concerned that this legislation could be a gateway for another agenda, which we're concerned would have a significant impact to the town clerk's office. Thank you for your opportunity to be heard.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Ms. Denette. So, it is your position that we should be taking further action to impose additional fees or fines on those who do not license their animal.

DEB DENETTE: That we would leave entirely to you, but as a clerk, if someone comes in to license their dog three months late, I have to fine them. But if someone never license their dog at all, there is no consequence for that individual.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Right. Right. And service animal, I mean, I guess, I believe, and you know, I'll have to check in with LCO on this, but I believe that we do have definitions of service animals. But your concern goes beyond that, right? That are some sort of arbitrary e-notations that can be obtained through the internet or various other sources that could be brought in and you would have to discern whether or not those would be valid.

DEB DENETTE: Exactly for the puppy, they mentioned having it come in you know, a service organization say a Fidelco, for example, the organization placed the puppy, they were going to provide the paperwork. That's good. But what do they do about the permanently placed dogs? That's not there. That's not written in alleged -- in this proposal.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. All right. I really appreciate your testimony today. It gives us something to contemplate as we move forward with this language.

DEB DENETTE: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I don't see any other questions, so we'll move right along. Thanks again. Be well.

DEB DENETTE: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Our next up on this testimony list is Charles Rothenberger from Save the Sound, followed by Jason Patlis, followed by Annie Hornish. Charles, are you with us? Gaia, do we have?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I have him in the room. If you'd like, you can move on to the next person on the list, who is Jason is number 17.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Charles, are you with us?

CHARLES ROTHENBERGER: I am, yes. I apologize. I am multitasking as I'm sure all of us are so.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yes, yes.

CHARLES ROTHENBERGER: But I did hear my name, so I appreciate it.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You are up and Jason, we'll get you immediately following Charles's testimony.

CHARLES ROTHENBERGER: Very good. So, I'd just like to say I appreciate the opportunity to speak. Save the Sound is in strong support of SB 931, which is really a simple Bill with huge potential benefits. This proposal builds on Connecticut successful history of implementing California's emission standards for light duty vehicles. As you're aware federal law recognizes California as a leader on vehicle emission standards and explicitly authorizes California to adopt standards that are more stringent than the federal minimum standards.

And also, expressly authorizes other states, such as Connecticut to adopt California standards, and we have a long history of doing that. We first adopted California standards for light duty vehicles in 2004, that has resulted in significant reductions in pollutants and has also assisted with our ability to meet our climate reduction goals since we also adopted California's zero emission vehicle standards.

As you're aware, the transportation sector accounts for nearly 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions and the heavy duty vehicle sector are actually responsible for a disproportionate share of those emissions. in addition to being major contributors, to both NOx and fine particulate matter. So. cleaning up these emissions from the heavy duty and medium duty vehicle sector is particularly important, and especially important for the health of low and moderate income populations living in our

dense urban communities and along our major transportation corridors.

So, there's a lot of benefit to Connecticut to, one, explore whether these standards actually will provide the benefits that we imagine they will, and if so, moving forward to adopt them just as we have so many other standards. And you know, again, important to point out that we have long history of moving in lockstep with California on these standards. It's not a new process for us. We've been doing it for decades, and is something that we are well versed in. So, we thank you for the opportunity and we urge the Committee to favorably report the Bill out of committee. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Charles. I actually don't see any hands or any questions for you, so I just wanna take the opportunity to really thank you for all of the work that you have all been doing. You've been significant contributors to the language that we have been crafting for many of these Bills and you particularly have an environmental justice lens when you are working with us and you do your homework and you bring information to us as Legislators to help us craft the best legislation we can for the environment for Connecticut. So, I know, I can say on behalf of all the Committee Members, thank you for everything that you're doing.

CHARLES ROTHENBERGER: Well, thank you. And I apologize for the lack of video, but you caught me by surprise, so.

REP. BORER (115TH): That's okay. And I apologize for my dog barking in the back.

CHARLES ROTHENBERGER: No, no worries.

REP. BORER (115TH): So, we don't have any questions or any other comments. So, we're going to thank you for your time.

CHARLES ROTHENBERGER: All right. Thank you very much.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. So, Gaia, I'm sorry, I just want to make sure I'm reading this right. Is Corrine [sic], is Corinne the next speaker?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: No, we have number 17, which is Jason.

REP. BORER (115TH): Oh, Jason Patlis.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Yes.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Okay. So, our next speaker is Jason Patlis, followed by Annie Hornish.

JASON PATLIS: All right. Thank you so much. Good afternoon. Co-Chairs Cohen and Borer, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Committee. As you just heard, my name is Jason Patlis. I'm the President and CEO of The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk. I'm delighted and honored to be testifying before you this morning, or this afternoon, as it is now.

I'm testifying on two Bills, raised Senate Bill 925 and then raised House Bill 6502. With respect to Senate Bill 925, I'm here on behalf of not only The Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, but also Beardsley Zoo and Mystic Aquarium. Your first question might be why the three of us are testifying on this Bill which relates to six species native to Africa including elephants, lions, leopards, rhinos, and giraffes.

Beardsley does not have any of these species in its collection. And I can guarantee on behalf of Steve Cohen at Mystique and myself, the aquariums are not looking to import these species and add them to our collection anytime soon. So, the first reason, we are testifying on this Bill is because we support very strongly the intent and the goal of this Bill

to protect wildlife in their natural habitats and to deter a cruel and inhumane treatment of those animals, whether they're endangered or threatened or not, what goes on with trophy hunting and what goes on with treatment of these animals is very important regardless of their -- of their condition as endangered or otherwise.

As institutions is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, we adhere to the highest standards of animal care for those animals within our collection. But we also all three of us zoos and aquariums around the country prioritize conservation of wildlife in their natural habitats. And so, for us, this Bill is consistent with our general philosophy.

The second reason we're testifying on this Bill is because we'd like to respectfully request one very small narrow change, and that is on line 25, there is a reference to museums being accepted from the prohibition. And we would like to add zoological institutions in front of museums for the same reason that museums are excluded. Specimens of these animals biofacts as they're called are very often used by zoological institutions and aquariums for the educational programs for the work we do with our guests and our students in particular, and while we don't have any of these particular species in question, the prohibition would give us pause and we would like to be accepted so that we can include these specimens as part of our educational programs in the future. And then with this change, we'd be very pleased and equally supportive of the legislation.

With respect to moving on to House Bill 6502, with respect to that legislation, I'm representing The Maritime Aquarium on our own. And we are in strong support of this Bill. The facts are sobering and mind-bending with respect to plastics, that includes the volume of the scope, the longevity of plastics in the environment, particularly in the ocean and in

particular, the impacts of these plastics in the ocean. We heard a little bit about that from prior witnesses.

The short goal is to divest society of these plastics and to do it as completely and as quickly and as best as we can. The starting point for this as the legislation provides is in single use plastics and then unnecessary plastics for which there are cost effective substitutes. We are leading by example at The Maritime Aquarium in our cafe. We've done away with plastic straws. We've done away with plastic utensils that are not biodegradable. In our gift shop similarly, we do not have stuffed animals with any plastic stuffing, nor do we have gifts that are wrapped in plastic. We have really eliminated plastic as much as we can almost entirely from what we do in the aquarium.

But leading by example is not enough. Earlier, we heard that policy needs to drive behaviors, and so this legislation is really critical. We can lead by example, The Maritime Aquarium --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I just want to interrupt for a moment because the timer went off a few moments ago and just wanted to let you know you're out of time.

JASON PATLIS: Okay. Well, it's only to endorse the legislation and to say that we need to not only lead by example, but we need the state to lead by its policies. And with that, thank you very much for your time.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. I see some hands raised for some questions. So Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Mr. Patlis for testifying today. I actually have some background at The Maritime Center from when I was a student going marine sampling with my teacher marine biologist, Jerry Caputo [sic] on

the RV Oceanic sampling marine water and counting diatoms and [inaudible] flagellates bedrock. But on that, my position may be a little bit different. You've mentioned an amendment that you would like to see in SB 925. And I really appreciate your education department. You have like a section on top for younger kids. I think it's been a challenge, but I don't think any of these animals will fit there.

And so, my question to you as you mentioned the word educational, and I just wanted to ask what do you call it educational in terms of one of those species being in captivity and why would they, if you can give me more valid points for this sort of amendment, 'cause really is troubling to me, but I'd love to hear about it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you.

JASON PATLIS: I think there are two ways to answer that question, Representatives Michel. The first is that if there is a recognition that museums have an educational role to play, and use these biofacts as part of their educational programs, then by extension zoological associations aquariums should have that same opportunity as museums do.

Secondly, with respect to what we do with those, with those specimens, I can tell you here at The Maritime Aquarium, we have first seal skins, for example, that we use as part of our education programs when we talk about the need to protect seals in the wild, when we talk about what the seals are like, what their bodies are like when they see them in our seal exhibit. And so, the skins, the artifacts, the specimens that come from wildlife are really critical for our educational programs. They provide something tangible and they provide a way for us to expound on the lessons that we have. I can go into more detail, but I'm respectful of the time of everybody here.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): I appreciate it. I appreciate it. I just have a concern that an animal in captivity doesn't act like it does in the wild. I understand viewing the animal, but that could be done without the animal due to today's technology. So, but I appreciate your answers and I'm done. Thank you, Madam Chair.

JASON PATLIS: If I may, Madam Chair, there's -- with respect to the provision in line 25, that provision relates to only artifacts and specimens of animals. There is a section elsewhere in the Bill with respect to the live animals and there already is an allowance for zoological institutions in that that is line 61 through 63 in that legislation.

Again, it already incorporates zoological institutions. So, we're looking for something that's comparable and that's appropriate and consistent in line 25 and section sub D.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you for the clarification.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Thank you. Representative Michel. Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for being with us today, Jason, I really appreciate the testimony. I just have a question about the plastic, you know, obviously, we're trying to be mindful if we do in fact move away from the traditional plastic produce bags are compostable bags. In fact, the answer to that, or do they also contribute to the problem? And I would just ask, I know, you know, your aquarium has done extensive research on microplastics and their harm, you know, knowing that potentially this is the lesser of two evils, but still, you know, I mentioned to our previous testifier that I was concerned about marine life, you know, if something takes four to eight months to break down in the ocean, are we still presented with the same issue that, you know,

traditional plastic produce bags present? You know, and so I just -- I'd love to have you weigh in on that a little bit and tell me what your thoughts are. And you know, what you'd like to see us do as a Committee

JASON PATLIS: Thank you, Senator. I was struck by the intensity and the specificity of the discussion earlier. I was afraid that I might be asked to opine on that, and I will confess that I would need to get back to you on an answer more specifically on biodegradable plastics versus plastics now and the kind of phased approach that that was discussed or studies that were discussed. I would not be in a position right now to offer insight directly to your question, but I will say this, that and that is to underscore the delirious impacts, the devastating impacts that exist on wildlife and the fact that there are more and more studies that show that those microplastics wind up being bioaccumulated. They're being seen in oysters and bivalves in their entirety. We then harvest those oysters and bivalves for our own diet. We are seeing them show up, not only in the digestion tracks of finfish, but we're seeing bioplastics accumulate in the tissue of finfish. And that again is what we eat when we when we eat fish. And so, there is a very strong and growing understanding of the direct impacts of microplastics in the ocean and us directly in a way that we did not know previously.

With respect to what all of the solutions are, again my testimony really is to push the General Assembly and this Committee to move as quickly as possible and to look at the science, to look at the experts, but to move as quickly and as comprehensively, as possible to eliminate plastics from the environment, again, taking into account all of the things that transcend my own purview, but fall into yours in terms of cost-effectiveness on technical feasibility, et cetera, et cetera.

I can testify that we would encourage you to move as quickly and as effectively and as comprehensibly as possible taking a broader suite of concerns into account.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Mr. Patlis. I appreciate it.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. Representative Dillon.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you. Madam Chair. And Thank you for your testimony. This is really kind of simple. Did you submit your requested amendment in writing to the Committee? The testimony that I looked at didn't have it in it and I simply wanted to look at it, you know, for consideration.

JASON PATLIS: Thank you, Representative. There were two written testimony submitted last night at about 8:00 PM. The first was on behalf of The Maritime Aquarium alone and that was on, you know, and that was on the HB 6502 on plastics. There was a second testimony that was submitted on behalf of Beardsley, Mystic, and ourselves for SB 925 and the specific request that we're making is in that testimony.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Good. Thank you so much. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you Representative Dillon. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you for being here to testify albeit remotely. I would be interested in perhaps some of the information that you have with regard to microplastics in the tissues of fish. I'm like I can understand how they might actually show up in an oyster especially being a bivalve, and I guess just for the record, I'm pretty sure, microplastics as an issue were pretty thoroughly discussed earlier as part of that compostable plastic bag, compostable

bag discussion, and I am -- I was pretty convinced based on my questioning that microplastics do not exist once the bag has been consumed. So, I just wanted to say that, but I would be very interested in the microplastics information. If you could send it to the Committee that would be helpful.

JASON PATLIS: I'd be delighted to, it's not work that we are doing at The Maritime Aquarium but it is literature in the scientific community that we've used and that I personally am familiar with. So, I'll be happy to pass that on.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Miner. I'm just looking, I don't see any other hands or questions. I just had a follow-up question to Bill 925. So, are you suggesting that we carve out for educational components? Can you just clarify that for me again?

JASON PATLIS: Sure. The language right now basically provides, and this is a section one, subsection B17, unless such activity is otherwise prohibited by federal law, the provisions of subsection B shall not apply. Then it's got a number of conditions, number one, number two, and then --

REP. BORER (115TH): We have the museums.

JASON PATLIS: Right, exactly. And then, and then it will say on line 25 as such specimen of big six African species is to be part of a temporary or permanent collection of a museum that has a tax exemption from the IRS. And so, we would ask the zoological institutions being included in addition to museums, such that if we've got any specimen of those species as part of a temporary permanent collection that that's allowed. I think by extension, we would have those specimens in our collection for educational purposes.

I don't know, I cannot speak for Beardsley, but certainly for The Maritime Aquarium and Mystic I can't speak for Mystic even. The Maritime Aquarium would not likely put those specimens on public display. We would be using them as part of our broader educational program, but the exception here is not necessarily limited to education.

REP. BORER (115TH): So, are you talking about existing specimens or new specimens in the future that come your way you want to be carved out?

JASON PATLIS: Yeah, future, I think that none of the three of us have any existing specimens right now. I think one of the concerns we have, well, I know one of the concerns we had with this legislation is the precedent that it sets for limiting the way we can do our educational programming, the tools, the products, the accoutrements that we could bring into our educational programming. Again, we operate consistent with federal law. We operate consistent with state law. We operate consistent with the accreditation standards, that are provided by the association zoological for zoos and aquariums. And those really all hold us to an extremely high standard of care and practice in what we do. And so we want to make sure that legislation does not necessarily limit us in ways that would undermine the work and the missions of the organizations.

REP. BORER (115TH): So, you've gone all this time without the specimens.

JASON PATLIS: That is correct. Again, I cannot speak for Beardsley. I could speak for, I could speak for The Maritime Aquarium.

REP. BORER (115TH): So, you've been able to conduct your educational programs without the specimens to date.

JASON PATLIS: That is correct. I will note that we do have specimens for educational purposes, skins and things like that, of animals that are not necessarily in our collection.

REP. BORER (115TH): So, accepting them in the future, do you think that encourages the hunting?

JASON PATLIS: No, not at all. I think hunting stands on its own as a practice, as a culture, you know, trophy hunting is really very separate from the way museums and zoos and aquariums conduct their programs, acquire wildlife, whether it's specimens or to Representative Michel's points, live animals. Again, those standards are very, very strict. We adhere to them, and you know, and they, I think provide the safeguards that this Bill is looking to do in terms of preventing cruel and inhumane actions and activities that affect wildlife, whether that wildlife is endangered or threatened or just wildlife that we want to respect.

REP. BORER (115TH): Got it. Okay. And then just one other question on the specimens for the educational purposes, with all of the technology that we have now, is it possible to provide the education, you know, with the 3D technology in a more modern way in a more, you know, sophisticated way?

JASON PATLIS: I don't know about a more sophisticated way or a more modern way, but I can guarantee seeing kids engage with live animals or with animal parts and products, there is nothing that is quite as immediate or as evocative, or as frankly impactful for young kids to be able to touch and feel and see immediately this connection to nature. And I've seen kids get that connection to nature, whether they are petting a seal skin that we have on display, as we're talking about why they're endangered, why they need to be protected or, you know, or touching a live tortoise that we have on display as well. I mean that connection is visceral, it's immediate, it's impactful.

There are also lots of studies that show how kids -- how live animals and how those accessories really add to an educational experience for a kid that is transformative.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. But just to confirm you haven't, you haven't had those specimens, you --

JASON PATLIS: I can speak a hundred percent comfortably with The Maritime Aquarium. I cannot speak on behalf of Beardsley and Mystic, but I can get you that answer.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. I just -- I guess my point is I'm just trying to reconcile it if we haven't had them as specimens. Right. And you've still been able to provide education to the children, do we really need them? That's what I'm trying to get at.

JASON PATLIS: But I understand the question. I think to the extent there is an exception already in the Bill for zoological institutions elsewhere. And the fact that this provision has an exception for museums to some extent you know, we're looking for some legislative drafting consistency that doesn't shortchange or undermine the work that we do, you know, by inadvertently or unnecessarily.

REP. BORER (115TH): I appreciate that. I did see a hand up, but then it went down. So maybe you answered their question already. Oh, back up. Representative Michel, are you, is your hand up?

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Yes. And it was just for a clarification that yes, the Bill is about trophy hunting and that there is already protections for animals being imported from other countries. So, I would say the clarification here is if there would be live animals as described in the Bill, there would only be in the US and from other institutions. That's all. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Thank you, Representative Michel. I don't see any other questions, so I want to thank you for your testimony.

JASON PATLIS: Thank you very much. As always a pleasure and an honor to be with you and thank you again.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Our next speaker is Annie Hornish. And Gaia, I see number 20 is Corinne. Is there a speaker number 19 or did --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Yeah, we have speaker 19 is Nicole Wong and speaker number 20 is Corinne and you'll see them over in the panelist.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. I see 17, 18, 20, but I know 18 is Annie Hornish. So, Annie, are you with us?

ANNIE HORNISH: I am.

REP. BOLINSKY (106TH): Okay.

ANNIE HORNISH: Thank you very much, Co-Chair Cohen, Co-Chair Borer, Vice-Chair Slap, Vice-Chair Gresko, Ranking Member Miner, Ranking Member Harding, and honorable Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Annie Hornish and on behalf of the Connecticut based supporters of The Humane Society of the United States, I'm here to testify on the following Bills.

First, we support Senate Bill 925, the big six trophy hunting ban. Today is world wildlife day. So, this Bill is especially timely and appropriate. The second Bill we support House Bill 6502, which intends to reduce the volume of plastics in our environment. This waste is detrimental to the environment and wildlife. Finally. the third Bill is HB 6504, AN ACT CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE.

We have common ground with the Department of Agriculture on two major components of this Bill. First, we support reduction to rabies quarantine period from six months to four months that aligns Connecticut with the best practices on nationwide.

And secondly, we support strongly support increased funding for the APCP'S Feral Cat Grant Program and the increased reimbursements to veterinarians. This is a hugely successful program by the Department of Agriculture with a near 100% compliance rate. So, we'd support -- we'd support, even increasing that percentage higher if that's possible. But we do oppose the rest of the Bill.

I first want to thank the Department of Agriculture for meeting this morning to discuss this Bill and for their willingness to ensure that community cats or feral cats are included. The redefinition of animal is problematic because it dramatically narrows the scope of animals to which animal control officers can intervene. Like when wildlife is injured and suffering, for example, like with car hits. It would also cause inconsistency and confusion in our statutes and with law enforcement.

Currently, there is consistency and so far, that an animal is defined as a brute creature. I think most people understand that brute creature means non-human animal, but I do agree that a better, more modern term should be used. This redefinition would create two definitions of animal in statutes, one for domestic animals and in ACO's handling of them and one for the cruelty laws. But animal control officers obviously deal with both sections of law regularly.

I understand that DEEP has jurisdiction over wildlife matters, but it's common practice that the local ACOs and police are the ones who usually are the first responders for injured wildlife. If a squirrel is injured, many ACOs will get them to a wildlife rehabilitator or a veterinarian. And that's

because DEEP lacks the staff. They can't be expected to be first responders everywhere. So, it's common practice already for ACOs to help wildlife.

ACOs even undergo training in solutions to wildlife conflicts, training that applies to their professional credentialing. I would suggest that we move forward with a solid common ground we have and get everyone at the table this summer, Department of Agriculture, DEEP, animal welfare groups, wildlife rehabilitators, and hammer out a single definition of animal. This inconsistency and confusion is moving us in the wrong direction and it's away from the compassion and empathy for wildlife. Thank you for your time.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Annie. Thank you for all that you do. And all of the information that you bring to us and sometimes letting us know, sometimes things we've missed. I don't see any questions or any hands. I'm surprised. Yeah, there he is. Representative Michel. I didn't see in the queue but Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm sorry, I'm dealing with two loner computers, my own computer during a Zoom meeting last week, it's batteries inflated. So, I just would caution my colleagues with the double Zooming and triple Zooming to look out for your computers.

REP. BORER (115TH): It's okay. We all have challenges. Go ahead.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Annie, thank you for testifying and you're such an amazing advocate and you work really hard on all the animal issues in our state. Can you go over again the definition for, what the current definition for animal is? 'Cause I'm -- I'm still -- I'm perplexed by it, maybe if you have any additional comments on this.

ANNIE HORNISH: Yeah, sure. Thank you for that question. Well currently, animal is defined in two areas of statute. One is section 29-108A and that defines the animal as a brute creature that applies to chapter, the chapter it's in which is 530A, and it also applies to the cruelty statutes which is 53-247. And that's written into chapter 538A, but it refers to another chapter. So, that's one definition of animal. And the second definition of animal is in the chapter that's being discussed here. Again, it's any brute creature for all of chapter 435, which is the the Bill being discussed here today.

But obviously. another concern we have is that if we read this redefinition, it would make it easier in the future to similarly redefine animal cruelty under the general animal cruelty statutes, which is 53-247 and that would vastly weaken the scope of anti-cruelty laws. Currently, they cover all animals as they should that cruelty laws, any animal applies but you know, because you know, all animals have the capacity to suffer. And so that by definition, they can be a victim of cruel treatment. So, it should be that way. And that's why I think it's really important that we get a definition that works in a definition that's consistent and easy to apply and easy for a law enforcement to understand when they read it.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you. Annie, just one more question, what are your thoughts on the proposed redefinition of poultry?

ANNIE HORNISH: Oh yeah. That's another area. Well, we, like I said, we'd support two sections of the Bill that we're a hundred percent in agreement with the department of Agriculture on. But the poultry definition, that's another example of where confusion could be added in. And I understand the Department of Ag and DEEP have different oversight, but when you're defining poultry one way for the Department of Ag, because in regards to food production, and then with Deep, that's a separate

use for like for example, pheasants, hunting pheasants versus, you know, raising and eating a bird or poultry that they're suggesting poultry is redefined to apply to animals use in food production, but it's really, I think it adds a lot of confusion to statutes to do that. And I think just for keeping things clear, it's best to get these definitions hammered out to have one definition of each of these categories.

REP. MCCARTY (38TH): Thank you for raising this argument because sometimes the statute's already confusing to me. Thank you. Thank you very much. Annie, and thank you, Madam Chair.

ANNIE HORNISH: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Representative Michel. You have another question or comment from Senator miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. There are a number of sections of this Bill. One of them talks about aligning language for regional animal control officers with local animal control officers. And I think attempts to clarify when an neglected animal may be found to be so poorly treated, malnourished or the number of other circumstances around line 159 to 162. It talks about them being euthanized by a licensed veterinarian. Is that a section of the Bill that you support?

ANNIE HORNISH: Thank you for that question, Senator. Right now, no, only because that definition of animal has changed and as a practical matter in the field, if an animal control officer comes across a raccoon was hit in the street by a car or something like that, and that animal was suffering or a deer, they should have that -- they should know that it's safe for them to dispatch that animal. And right now, that's why I don't agree with the rest of the section because it's all predicated on that definition of animal.

And so, it would limit the first responders, police, and ACOs from acting because they'd have to contact DEEP who would have to come out and that's just not practical. And when an animal is suffering, we want to end their suffering as soon as possible. So that's why we have problems with that. In a normal situation with a dog brought in or something where a licensed vet is, you know, analyzing that or looking at that animal or assessing the animal. Yes, that would be agreeable that while if the vet is doing that, they would be the proper ones to euthanize.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Well, the section that I was talking about didn't deal with wild animals. It was dealing about whether or not an animal in a human's care was being humanely treated and applying for permission to euthanize that animal. So, my question is do you have an issue with the court being able to make a decision when it comes to a neglected animal being humanely euthanized?

ANNIE HORNISH: Thank you. And maybe I'm sorry if I'm misreading what the proposed language was. But I thought the definition of animal would apply to the entirety of the Bill. If I am wrong, if I'm wrong, and also the application of wildlife is my main concern. Did I answer you? And I'm sorry.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Well, I'm not sure. So, I'm just trying to be sure. So, if the language, if the definition of animal was left alone and the language allowing for a regional ACO to apply to the court for euthanization by a licensed veterinarian, you'd be okay with that.

ANNIE HORNISH: Well, not if it would require the veterinarian to have to come to a scene of a car hit for wildlife, because that's not practical, they would never be able to get out there. If this is a neglect case, it depends, I guess it would have to depend, right now I'm sorry, I'd have to reread that care carefully there. But my understanding is that

if that's a hindrance to putting an animal out of suffering, my answer would be no. And I'm sorry if I'm not answering that question. I'm not sure I understand what it is.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): But no, thank you.

ANNIE HORNISH: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): You're all set, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Yes, for today. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Thank you. I don't see any other questions or any other hands up for Annie, so we want to thank you for being here for all your contribution to the conversation.

ANNIE HORNISH: Thank you very much.

REP. BORER (115TH): And all your advocacy for our animals. Thank you. All right. Our next speaker is Nicole Wong who will be followed by Corinne Bolding.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: And Nicole Wong, we don't have on. So, we'll go with number 20, Corinne Bolding unless --.

NICOLE WONG: I'm actually on.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Oh, wonderful.

NICOLE WONG: Can you hear me?

REP. BORER (115TH): Yeah. There you go. Okay.

NICOLE WONG: Hi there, Good afternoon, Chair Cohen, Chair Borer, Vice Chair Slap, Vice-Chair Gresko and the Ranking Members and other Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Nicole Wong and I'm a campaign manager with Green for All, a program of the national social justice nonprofit Dream Corps.

I manage our team's clean transportation and transit equity advocacy to promote the adoption of clean cars, trucks, and buses in neighborhoods, overburdened by transportation pollution. I'm here today to express strong support for SB 931, AN ACT CONCERNING EMISSION STANDARDS FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY DUTY VEHICLES.

Connecticut's participation in the joint regional medium and heavy duty MOU last July was an important step toward reducing emissions for the most heavily polluting vehicles in the state. Now, Connecticut has the opportunity to also reduce pollution even further by adopting the advanced clean trucks rule or ACT. The ACT rule built on the MOU to set a more ambitious sales target to transition the state to zero emission medium and heavy duty trucks.

Although, heavy duty vehicles make up only 10% of vehicles on the US roads, they are the source of close to 30% of global warming emissions and 45% and 57% respectively of NOx and PM2.5 pollution that as you know, increases the risk of asthma, heart attack death from COVID-19 and other serious health issues.

This vehicular pollution, especially harms low-income communities and communities of color who are more likely to live near heavily trafficked areas, such as freight hubs, ports, and highways. Across the region can use of color exposed to 66% more air pollution from vehicles than white communities. And according to the 2019 state health assessment, Hispanic and black residents in Connecticut visited the emergency room due to asthma at almost five times the rate of white residents.

Adopting strong, medium and heavy duty vehicle standards is imperative to begin addressing the disproportionate pollution burden that communities of color have historically faced all improving public health and economic outcomes across the state. For instance, reduced asthma rates alone can

mean fewer hospital visits, reduced medical Bills and fewer missed work and school days.

Additionally, transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Connecticut. Therefore, bold policies like California's medium and heavy duty rules are crucial to reduce emissions from these vehicles and advanced Connecticut's climate goals. As more and more zero-emission medium and heavy duty vehicles become available and battery prices drop, adopting the standard will be crucial to marshal the needed investments, infrastructure, and planning for a pollution free transportation sector. So, in sum, please pass SB 931 to reduce health disparities, reduce greenhouse gas pollution, and spur the market for zero emission vehicles in Connecticut for years to come. Thank you so much for your consideration today.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Nicole. Well done. Thank you for coming and testifying before the Environment Committee. I'm looking, I don't see any raised hands in the Zoom, any questions? It sounds like you eloquently conveyed your thoughts and there's no questions, so thank you very much.

NICOLE WONG: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): All right. Our next speaker is Corinne, followed by, hang on a second. So, Gaia, I'm sorry. I have Corinne number 20 and then Jeanine number 22. Is there a 21?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I don't have 21 in yet.

REP. BORER (115TH): Oh, okay. All right. So, our next speaker is Corinne, followed by Jeanine.

CORINNE BOLDING: Thank you. Chairperson Cohen, Chairperson Borer and Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Corinne Bolding, and I'm honored to be here to testify before your Committee.

I'm a first-year student at Trinity College and Chairperson of ConnPIRG zero waste campaign.

We as a student advocacy group strongly supports passage of HB 6502, use of certain polystyrene products, availability of single use straws, release of certain balloons and compostable nature of single use produce bags. In America, we have a stuff problem. Our economy encourages us to make use and toss at the greatest possible speed, which results in the using and disposing of an estimated 300 million plastic grocery bags, 70 million styrofoam cups and half a Billion plastic straws everyday.

About a third of the plastic trash ends up in rivers, lakes, and oceans, while most of it sits hundreds of years in our landfills. One of the worst forms of this plastic pollution as polystyrene or Styrofoam. It's toxic, breaks apart easily and never really goes away. Nothing we use for hut for a few minutes should pollute our environment for hundreds of years.

In long-term, we need to move beyond plastics. It is not enough to recycle and reuse. We need to stop creating unnecessary and harmful waste in the first place. A concrete step we can take is to eliminate unnecessary single use products, including bags, straws, and foam containers. These single use products, which are used for an only an average of 12 minutes sit in our landfill for up to a millennium and represent the most absurd but preventable sources of plastic waste.

Cities and countries all over the world have already imposed bans or purchasing fees on plastic bags, straws, and EPS products, which have proven to be effective in reducing waste. Alternatives are plentiful that do far less harm on our environment. We applaud the Committee for the work it's already done to phase out single use plastic shopping bags. And with this Bill, we support your work to take the next step.

The move towards banning polystyrene, takeout, containers, and prohibition of single use straws in full-service restaurants continues our progress towards zero waste society. ConnPIRG is excited to be releasing our slash the trash webinar this coming Earth Day, April 22nd, 2021. And we urge the Committee to deliver this Bill to the Governor on Earth Day 2021 to join in celebration. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to continuing our work on this issue and in the General Assembly for the rest of the session.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Corinne, and thank you for your great testimony and clearly you have a passion for something we all on the committee have an interest in. So, we very much thank you for being here. I actually don't see any questions in the queue for you. So, with that, have a great day and thanks for coming on virtually.

CORINNE BOLDING: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): You're welcome.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Representative Borer, I do see that Randall has just joined, so I promoted him to be speaker.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Randall Collins. Okay. So, our next speaker is Randall Collins, followed by Jeanine. Randall, are you? So, is Randall in the panelist room?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Let me go get him.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Go find Randall, 'cause I see he's in the other room.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Yes. He left the room and then I had to rename him by his number and just promoted him in.

REP. BORER (115TH): Got it. Got it. Okay. Randall, you have been promoted to speaker.

RANDALL COLLINS: Thank you very much. I'm still working my way through Zoom world and I figured that was, that was on me. And my name is Randy Collins, Advocacy Manager with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. I'm here to testify today in support of House Bill 6497, AN ACT CONCERNING STORMWATER AUTHORITIES.

CCM strongly supports this Bill. It's an issue that we've been working on for many years since we have worked over the course of a year drafting and coming to an agreement on the current MS4 stormwater permit. The new permit contains a significant number of expansions from the older permit. And these are unfunded mandates that were put on our municipalities, knowing that this is the stormwater permit is what we have, it's not going away.

We are looking for the ability to create a stormwater authority program to allow municipalities to give them another means to fund paying for the requirements of the permit. This would expand upon Public Act 07154, which had created a pilot program for four municipalities, which were Norwalk, New Haven, New London and Stonington, created a pilot program to allow those four municipalities to create an authority. And we were simply looking to expand that language to all of our municipalities.

Currently, New London is the only one that has the stormwater authority. Stonington is actively pursuing a stormwater authority. They were things have gotten a little off track because of the COVID. but the Bill simply would create a process by which municipalities, you know, couldn't by local option enact a stormwater. That authority could then set rates based on the amount of impervious surface a property has. The rates that authority set would then have to be further approved by a local town council, a board of selectmen, whatever that local

governing body is, as a secondary measure, to make sure that those costs are in line.

And any money raised by the stormwater authority would be required to be spent on the mitigation of stormwater. As I said, this is something we allow for towns to do, towns and cities to do. And something that we would like to see expanded to all of our municipalities. We have put in, there is language that we almost got this passed in 2019. We ran into a problem. This Bill does address it by defining who, what a municipality is to make sure that are 169 towns and cities are clearly defined as the authorities or the enabling authorities that can create these stormwater authorities.

As I said, I've written submitted testimony, I'd be happy to answer any questions.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Randy. And I know that you, CCM has worked very hard on this issue and something you've been working on for quite some time. I don't see any other questions, but I'd like to -- Oh, I do Senator, let me defer to Senator Miner and then we'll come back to me. So, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for being here, Randy. Good to see you. So, I want to, I guess, put my small town hat on for a moment and ask you whether CCM views the creation of a stormwater authority in communities that have no collection system for treatment similarly to the way they do others that have perhaps a combined collection system or are anticipating a standalone stormwater collection system that would then be attached to a treatment facility. How does CCM view these? Are they different or are they all the same?

RANDALL COLLINS: Currently, I believe it's 134 towns have a storm are under the requirement of MS4 permit. And that those towns are established or set based upon, it's a federal, it's a federal

requirement based on the Census of Bureau of who gets it. So, Willington -- Torrington is not under the MS4 permit, but Willington is, because of a population density that they have from UConn. So, I think, and we know that that number is going to grow.

We've seen that the requirements set down by the feds. So, we've encouraged our smaller municipalities to start being proactive in taking some of these stormwater mitigation measures. When we work the permit that they can get credit for that disconnect standards, the 2% disconnection standards that are within the permit for work previously done. So, we think if municipalities establish, even if they're not under the requirement, they're still treating stormwater and, you know, if they think that they need the additional resources that could be provided by a stormwater authority, we wouldn't deny them that opportunity, but it's a local option.

I think a lot of towns I mean I grew up in Salem, Connecticut. We don't have water sewer. I don't think that this is something that they would put onto their residents, but when you look at a community, you know, like Stamford, and the requirements that they're under to meet the stormwater permit with 11,000 catch basins, it's a tool as a resource that they could definitely use and I know that New London has it and you know, it applies across the board. So, I think our goal is to provide municipalities a tool. We don't want to set a one size fits also. So, it could be something very minor.

The other point is we encourage, you know, our smaller towns. You know, the idea that, "Hey, if a municipality or a property was to, I'm going to repave my driveway and that if I, you know, put in, you know, made it impervious disconnected as a residential homeowner, that there could be a discount." And I believe that that's the way New London does it, that there is benefits of

disconnecting. So, the idea is we're not looking to, we'd rather see the disconnection put into place than raise the revenue because what we raise is not offsetting, not fully offsetting the cost of what it's going to take to meet the MS4 permit.

I don't know if that quite answers your question, but.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Well, I guess, so I think this is an important conversation for us to be having and I just want, I guess to be clear in my mind that as we're having this conversation, it's not contemplated that this would be only for large municipalities, that it's conceivable that a community like Cornwall could Institute a stormwater authority and program, they would have to fit within certain, but it's not really limited to only municipalities above of population of, you know, pick a number.

It's intended to provide municipalities with an option to provide the financial resources which would be garnered through some user fee, presumably similar to a sewer treatment plant and a sewer collection system. But for those communities that may find another way of dealing it just a straight discharge into someone else's remaining property. It's conceivable, I guess, listening to you that they may not be part of that program. There may actually be opportunities to exempt them from what might apply in a business district as opposed to town-wide.

RANDALL COLLINS: Yeah, as I said the way, I base a lot of what do we work off of it? We look at what New London did. As I said, they charge about, I think it's, they have a couple of different rates and it's charged at like \$7.50 per thousand square feet of impervious surface. That data is pulled from the GIS mapping that they do. The New London actually assesses that the scale to all real property owners and they assess it to themselves.

So, the City of New London based on their impervious surface, we'll write a check to their stormwater authority, which goes towards mitigating the cost of the stormwater runoff flood reduction efforts.

So, you know, as you said, if I took a town like Salem and there no sewer, you know, limited if any stormwater runoff, I don't think that the town would adopt that. I mean that's something that each individual town would take into, you know, into account. But if you have a town, a city like Stamford, you know, or as I said, Stonington is currently looking at doing this, which is going to be a mix of, you know, they've got some commercial areas, they've got some highly built up residential and they've got some very rural side, but you know, the requirements of the permit it's -- as I said, it's not based on a town's population.

You wouldn't think that Willington would be in and Torrington is not, but it's a federal standard based on the latest census, which is going to change when the new numbers come out. So, you could have small towns conceivably along the 395 corridor, you've seen it pushing up from Norwich and pushing down from Worcester, Mass and eventually those they're gonna catch more and more of those towns. But so, if you talk to those towns, like you can look and is this coming probably? And if it is, what are you going to need to do? What are you gonna need to do to meet the standard requirements of that permit? Because if you're not in compliance, then you're going to be subject to, you know, a consent order, you know, from, from DEEP. So, you know, we're not being in council training when we do this, but it's a very expensive permit.

There's a construction permit. There's a linear permit for DOT. So, this is simply something we're not looking to rewrite the MS4 standards. We're not looking to create, you know, new retention models. We're just saying, you know, you base on the amount of impervious surface, you know, this is the fee

that we need to collect and meet these standards. Otherwise, it just simply goes onto that property tax, which is on residential homeowners. It's not, we're not looking to land new tax, we're already paying the Bill. We're just looking to find another way outside of that property tax to pay.

SENATOR MARTIN (31ST): Thank you. Good to see you.

RANDALL COLLINS: Good to see you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Randy. And thank you for those answers. I don't see any other questions in the queue for you. So, we want to thank you for your testimony and all your work on this issue. Thank you.

RANDALL COLLINS: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Our next speaker is Jeanine, followed by Kathy Flaherty and Mary-Ann. So, we'll start with Jeanine.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Okay.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Representative Borer. Good afternoon, Representative Borer, Senator Cohen Ranking Members, Vice Chairs, and honoring Environmental Committee Members. My name is Jeanine Behr Getz. I'm here today representing BYO Connecticut, which is a citizen's coalition of 21 Connecticut towns, reducing plastic waste. I'm here today to support HB 6502, and to register a couple of considerations that we would like you to consider going forward.

The first is under section two, like the plastic bag Bill that was passed in 2019. And in section one and section three of the current Bill, there are allowances for ordinances that are already existed or ordinances that are stricter or as strict or

stricter than going forward to be protected. So, we're asking the Committee to consider adding that language under section two of 6502.

We have currently four BYO Connecticut towns with -- actually five with current active legislation that address polystyrene and straws. And they currently all meet or exceed the legislation in the section two. Also, we have two other towns who are currently working on this. So, this leads me to my next point and ask is, or it seems like a lofty ask perhaps to expand straws to stirs, cutlery and other as defined here accessory disposable foodware, which is very common definition used around the country in styrofoam and waste reduction Bills.

And this will just expand the strength of what we're trying to do here the intentions of reducing waste. So, again, several of our towns, two of our towns that already had legislation passed on this address, cutlery, address straws, stirs, and so forth. They do not in any way conflict with your section three as far as upon request. And they recognize people with disabilities and ask for, so those are all covered there.

The last point that we're asking for consideration on is section five, which is the study. And we have three specific points that you'd like to address with the Committee. We applaud the Committee's innovation and studying these materials. They're coming out fast and wildy. So, it's great to hear from Commissioner Hulburt today and also from Sound Waters and Maritime Aquarium about the effect that these new products might have on our maritime and our oyster beds and a strong economy that we rely on in Connecticut.

So, I would ask that the study, I know an earlier speaker said that some of these bags don't break down from four to eight months or 730 days or two years. And this study seems very limited in its scope as far as 180 days. We would ask that you

extend this study to allow for the breakdown of the compostable produce bags. We're also asking for you to add a section into section 5A2 147 at the end of the composting test period. The final report show include an analysis of decomposition materials, including, but not limited to heavy metals known carcinogens and endocrine, sorry, endocrine, oh my gosh, disruptors, you know what I'm saying?

So, in previous work that I've done on toxic chemical reform, we know that fragrance and proprietary formulas are often loopholes for industry not to divulge their contents. So, we feel as though this is a great way for this science study to actually see what's leftover when it composts or decomposes or what happens. And lastly, on this same section we're asking for this study to also make sure that at least five different environments are examined, industrial composting, home composting, anaerobic digestion, soil, and fresh and salt water. As you all know, you know, we sit on --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I just want to interrupt for just one moment because I rang the bell a few moments ago and I want to make sure that we can wrap up.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Sorry, Gaia. Yes, so sorry. We have one of the most important estuaries in the country and we need to take care of it. So, thank you for your time. Thank you for your work always. This is a glorious Bill and we're very excited to support it. So, thank you for your time. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

REP. BORER (115TH): Sorry. I was on mute. I was thanking you. And before, I turn it over to Representative Michel, I just, I'm curious, what are the four towns that are BYO?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Norwalk, Stamford, Westport Hamden has a straw also and Groton also.

REP. BORER (115TH): And that's through local ordinance.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: And these were through local ordinances, yeah.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay, great. Terrific. Thank you. Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madame Chair. Thank you, Jeanine for testifying today. Nice to see you and thank you also for your amazing work of all those years.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): You mentioned section two, what, so in Stamford we have a really good ordinance that it took a short time, but it did take some time to train the population to get accustomed to these changes. What would this Bill do as written to the ordinance of the city of Stamford?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Well, thank you for that question, Representative Michel. We are hoping that there will be consideration for the Committee that the previous ordinances that are already in place will be protected because as we do know, it takes a while for people to change behaviors and once they do, they seem to be set on those. So, I know Stamford has one of the strictest ordinances out there for polystyrene and straws.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): So, this Bill as written currently would take away the ordinance that we currently have in effect in Stamford.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: So, it's interesting, because in section one, there's a provision and in section three, there's a provision to protect or ordinances that are already in place, but in section two on polystyrene, there is not.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Okay.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: So, we're asking for that to be added into that section as well.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Okay. Well, that sounds great. Plus, I know the City of Stamford is working on other bands currently. You certainly don't want the good work to protect the environment to be lowered by a state Bill. We want to make sure that if the staff is also involved and with broad Bills, that they should be able to. Thank you very much Jeanine and thank you, Madam Chair.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you, Representative Michel.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Representative Michel. Senator Kasser.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome Jeanine, it's so great to see you and thank you for the decades of work that you have already committed to our environment and protecting the state's natural resources. I know that you always do your homework on economic impact, and that's part of the very thorough process that BYO does when drafting and advocating for local ordinances.

So, I just want to ask you from your experience or any data that's been collected from the towns that you've already had success in, what has been the economic impact of these ordinances?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you, Senator Kasser. Good to see you. And so, the economics, so we're looking at twofold. So, when we started with plastic bags four years ago that was right on the break of the wave of the waste crisis. It was certainly some towns and cities were already recognizing deficits in their waste management budgets because of the lack of landfills or incinerators, or actually the transportation of moving all this waste. So, we

continue to examine the economic impact of the styrofoam removals and also straws and so forth.

But most of these ordinances are less than a year old that are in place. So, we will continue to examine the impact that we know that they've been removed from the waste stream, which, you know, it lightens the burden on the waste municipalities because they are, you know, every renegotiation of transportation and waste management as opposed to waste reduction is costing our towns money.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH): Thank you so much. And what about the economic impact on local businesses? Is this a hardship or are they easily able to accommodate it? Does it maybe even have an economic benefit to local businesses?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: So that's a great question. Thank you, Senator Kasser. So, we have seen in, I know in Westport, there was some concern at first as far alternatives and price increases, but many of the restaurants have come back seemingly. We've also done an audit in our town in Greenwich. We've already seen that a majority of them have already turned over their inventory and are not providing because of COVID, but they're not providing any accessories without request. And also, many of them have already decreased or increased or has have decreased or eliminated polystyrene as well.

So, this is the wave of the future because of municipality budgets. And I know there was a study done about the 35% of millennials, I think, are making conscious decisions of where they eat and how they shop based on the environmental stance that the restaurants and retailers have. So, I hope that answers your question.

SENATOR KASSER (36TH): Thank you so much. That's what I suspected that it actually is an advantage as a marketing advantage and will draw customers, environmentally conscious, socially conscious

customers and then, you know, as the data comes back and maybe, you know, the fear subsides, it will become standard practice as many other things have. Thank you so much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Kasser. And before we go on to, we do have a question from the Senator. I just wanted to clarify for some of the Members that on the straw component of the Bill, it's not an elimination of the straw. It's a, don't automatically provide it. So, you know, when you go into the restaurant, sometimes restaurants automatically put the straws, sometimes it has the paper on it. Sometimes it doesn't have the paper on it. And they need to toss that away. So, it's completely wasteful because they can't serve it to somebody and then take it back and reserve it. And a lot of people don't use it. So really, it's a don't automatically give the straw out rather than being them all together. So, with that, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for being here. You know, the leadership of this Committee grappled with how we were going to try and package Bills, you know, unintended and provide, you know, an opportunity to have good conversations about what we think we can do and maybe not spend a lot of time on things that we were really unsure that we'd even have the bandwidth to do under the COVID environment, doing Zoom meetings and Zoom hearings and the like and so.

You know, I say that in speaking, I guess, directly to your comment about adding utensils and some other items to the Bill, I remain worried that the public hasn't quite figured out how to engage government, people that are involved on a regular basis do, but rather than have someone be surprised. I probably would prefer to see those items left to another day for another discussion. Not that I'm necessarily opposed to moving away from them. In fact, there are

some of the places that I've gone to eat, they make it a point to tell you that they're not really plastic utensils, there's something else. But I just -- I'd be uncomfortable trying to expand the language as you've suggested for those items. Although, you know, I think we should have a conversation about preserving the local rights, especially when there are some ordinances that may be stronger.

This plastic, and I wish I could season myself to use a different word, a bag issue, I think about a lot of the plastics that we use clear film that we use and the ways that we use it and wonder if we can't be moving, shouldn't be moving in a direction that is far more likely to deteriorate without developing microplastics in the ground and in the water. And that's what I think most of these films are.

The gentleman that testified earlier talked about the agricultural benefit of using these films, as opposed to other films that are made out of petroleum-based plastics. My interest in this topic is that the greatest problem we face is the 513,000 tons of food waste in the State of Connecticut. And if we were able to provide as part of the food procurement process items that would almost decompose as quickly as the items that we purchased, that's been my interest. Why is that a bad. I guess, interest because I get a sense that continuing to study doesn't move us along towards putting some of these products in place where they might actually benefit the long-term goal that we have.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you, Senator Miner for your question. And I know I mentioned that the cutlery may have been lofty in what you all were proposing, but I did want to state that there are several of our BYO towns that already have legislation that address cutlery and those things that you get when you get delivery that you didn't ask for that, you just immediately throw away. Those

account for, I think it's 290,000 tons of waste a year. So, I figured you guys were going for it.

I might just add a few more things in, and of course, it's upon request as Representative Borer pointed out about straws. So, we just wanted that language to also be upon requests for cutlery and accessories. I know that Grubhub and Uber Eats are now changing your policies to ask before you get, so they have opt-in programs to receive this type of waste. If you truly need it, you can get it. But there are no longer descending the waste. So, it actually would be an advantage to your point of reducing waste in our waste stream too when you were talking about food waste as well.

This is just more plastic waste that cannot be reused. It's going to be incinerated, landfilled, and we're running out of space and incinerators and so forth so. Thank you. I appreciate your comment on that, and I hope that you might reconsider.

In regards to section five, I'm sorry I misunderstood, I thought this was calling for a study, so I think that.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): So, I think you're right. The way the process works, the Ranking Members and Committee persons generally don't direct how some of these things are drafted and I believe proponents have had contemplated a more direct step to be taken this year, really trying to move us in a direction of replacing rolls of clear plastic, petroleum-based film bags, with a color guided, color coated compostable bag to move us down that road toward the planting the petroleum-based film products was something else, plant-based oil film product. At least until we figure out how to wrap some of this stuff.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Yes. And thank you for refocusing me. So I would say just in that world alone, there are different feedstocks coming out and

like hemp, that was mentioned earlier. So, there's corn, there's potato. There are all different types of feedstocks as well. So, my understanding, this was a study to really study what the options are for consumers out there. I know I visited Whole Foods yesterday, and they had green produce bags. So, I just assumed those were compostable. After reading the fine print, they were not. So, they were a hundred percent fossil fuel-based bags.

So, I would say that BYO Connecticut is committed to educating our citizens of the state and we're also committed to reducing waste. So, we will make a promise that we will, during this study, we will communicate with citizens to bring their own produce bags. And then in regards to substituting bags in a grocery store and those roles, that's not my business model. So, I don't want to speak for those stores because they would have to incur costs that I don't really have this as speaking about saying that they can or cannot.

And on another note, I know that in municipalities that are rolling out food waste programs, they are purchasing or giving away those food bags when someone picks up their buckets, so that food waste scrap programs they're going, they're fueling, people are allowed to use those bags. I know some people who work in and live in the city in New York City, they have compost in their homes, they freeze it. And then they have a bucket at the bottom of their basement that they put their food scraps in. So, I think this is a collaborative effort going forward, so I don't know if that answered your question, Senator Miner, sorry. I'm very --

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Well, no, no, and I certainly don't want to characterize your comments. So, I won't, I just, you know, I understand there's some opposition to plastic of any color. And so, it just -- this has intrigued me in that as a gardener, as a composter.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Me too.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): It's an individual that knows that if I take the other plastic bags and walk them out to my compost pile, they'll be there years after, I mean, eventually I have to fish them out of there and throw them in the garbage.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Yes.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): I would prefer to have a bag that when my cucumbers and my broccoli stems are deteriorated, the bag is gone too. And that's what I found out with this material is that it really does work. And so, I guess I'm still mystified by the opposition, but I understand that it exists. And I'd like to think that humans at some point could differentiate between the two. But we're not going to get there today, so thank you. And I really do appreciate your effort and all the hard work you've put into all of these issues.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you, Senator Miner. I hope you recognize I'm not an opposition. I was just saying that we support the study, so.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Thank you.
Representative Demicco.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Thanks. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Jeanine, for your testimony and for your hard work. I appreciate it. You always give us, you know, good, good, knowledgeable, good information. So, I have a question to follow up on Senator Miner's discussion with regards to House Bill 6502, specifically about the last section of the Bill dealing with the bags.

So, did I read this incorrectly or did I read it correctly to say that this study is going to be done on the product or products of one single company? Did I read that properly? I don't have the Bill in front of me.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: That was not my understanding, Representative Demicco. It says that they shall accept applications on behalf of manufacturer single use produce bags for the performance of a study at the request of said Commissioner, which is the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, and to be done by the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering to determine if compostable single use produce bag is available for use that does not adversely impact the environment, land, air, and waters of the state.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay. I thought -- maybe I'm mistaken, I thought that earlier in that section, that last section of the Bill, it said something about the product of a company, but perhaps I'm wrong. And I guess I'll just have to go back and take a look.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: I might have misread as well, but I don't think you did. I think it was saying it would be, it's open to applications and that the Commissioner maybe, there maybe the Commissioner has at will to see who gets into the study on that piece of, it's a little confusing.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Would you recommend that we study more than just a one or two? Would you recommend that we do a more comprehensive study?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Yes, I would recommend that you did a more comprehensive study with different feedstocks, for sure. Also, you know, after hearing Commissioner Hurlburt, I was very taken with his, you know, his concern obviously in aqua agriculture and the impact that has on our sweet economy.

So, I would even suggest this was not in my written testimony, but after hearing him speak today, that perhaps their condition is in somehow involved in this study as well, because they're directly impacted by this, by these bags, for sure, so. And especially if they don't compose or breakdown in water, certain water situations and so forth. It could be detrimental to our oyster beds.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that. I don't want to take any more of the Committee's time. Thank you, Jeanine. Thank you. Madam Chair.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you, Representative Demicco.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Representative Demicco. Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And I love to see you as always and thank you for all of your, and BYO's hard work. As you know, I work closely with, you know, BYO groups in my area, and I'm just grateful for all the work that you all have done.

I am curious now you've piqued my interest on this cutlery and accessories. It's not something we've talked about too much before, and certainly is in line with some of the language in the Bill. Could you just lay out for me, first how -- you said before, you named the four municipalities formulas, the palette, those words, those that have the straw ban, is that correct? Or it would be straw upon request or is that polystyrene and the straw? I just, -- I want to clarify. There are a number of towns that have a polystyrene ban and a number of towns that have a straw ordinance?

JEFFREY GENTES: Thank you, Senator Cohen for the question. So, Groton, Westport, Stamford and Norwalk, sorry, have polystyrene and straw upon

request. Hamden, BYO Hamden has just a plastic bag ordinance, checkout bag ordinance, and a straw upon request, combination.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): And I thank you for that. Are there other towns that you are aware of that are trying to move forward on either the strong applied request language or polystyrene as a local ordinance?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Yes, so we have two additional BYO that are working on ordinances right now. Greenwich is one of them and Keenan is another. And we were inspired by Grubhub and Uber Eats to start including the cutlery and so forth, but Norwalk already has cutlery in their ordinance. And so does Westport.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Norwalk and Westport. And when you speak cutlery and accessories, can you just tell me, what that would include?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Yeah, so I just ordered from a restaurant the other day, so I'm very familiar with the waste that I have compiled. So, when it came with my food, there was a plastic tub of salt, there was a plastic tub of pepper. There were cutlery in a plastic bag. There was packets of sauces. So those are all, what they call food, disposable foodware that perhaps should be upon request or opt into a program as opposed to just automatically sent or automatically given to you in the restaurant.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. And I mean, I think, you know, by now and as do most of the Members of this Committee of reducing single use plastics and reducing waste, I do think, the cutlery and accessories takes a little bit of education, right? Because the other items, if you don't have a straw, you can drink out of the side of a cup, if you don't have polystyrene, there's something else in casing your food. But if you get out of a restaurant and you don't have a spoon to eat your soup with, or you

don't have a fork, so that presents a little bit more of an issue.

How are those local ordinances? Did they run education campaigns? Was there anything of that nature that went along with it?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Yeah, so they did run education campaigns. And then I, sorry, I keep defaulting to Uber Eats, but they're one of the largest companies in the country doing food delivery at this time. So, they're actually, you know, the ones coordinating a lot of deliveries for restaurants and they instituted an opt-in program. Yeah, so --

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): It's interesting as presumably with Uber Eats or at the food delivering, you're at your home or an office where you might be able to obtain something like that, as opposed to, you know, on the go. So, I just, just need to be thoughtful about that, but I'm really saying I'm grateful for your testimony and grateful and as I said for all your advocacy and bringing this to our attention, so thank you so much.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you for your consideration and thank you again for HB 6502.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Jeanine. I just -- I had a quick follow-up question. Oh, I saw a Representative Gresko. I'll -- let me just grab my, get my question. There was four cities that are BYO. Where did the concept originate from within those cities, do they have a strong, sustainable Connecticut program? Do they have a council member that introduced it? I'm just, you know, of course we want to pass this legislation, so that it's across the board, but, you know, for other like programs or, you know, components of this, this legislation that my -- not making it over the finish line, I'm just wondering how we can get more local ordinances across our state.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you, Representative Borer for the question. I think that it was a combination of mandates by the mayors of these towns to reduce waste that it's affecting municipality budgets. I think it's also just in their -- you know, they're trying to provide a healthier environment for their citizens. So, I feel as though it might be a combination of grassroots efforts, municipal efforts and just an overall citizenship concern for many of these ordinances as we have seen with the checkout bags as well.

REP. BORER (115TH): Great. Thank you so much. And we do have another --

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Okay.

REP. BORER (115TH): We do have another question from Representative Gresko.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Okay. Thank you.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Madam Chair. Getting back to Uber Eats, I don't use them. So, if I was to do it old school and call up on the phone or do it a more modernly online, there's a box I have to check to get the cutlery or does the person on the other end of the phone ask me, do I want a knife and fork? Is that -- is that the process?

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Yes, yes. There are both processes in place, so that's -- and I don't use Uber Eats except for, I have a 17-year-old child. So I've been introduced to Uber Eats and Grubhub, and there's no nothing like not leaving your bed to get your food delivered. I thought that's what I was doing, but now it's delivered by Uber Eats.

So, it's an opt-in program. And also, you know, from an economic impact statement or economic proposition for restaurants, a lot of this waste, they wouldn't have the, you know, liability, not the liability,

but the burden of providing these things if people didn't want them. Right. So, it'll be a cost reduction for many restaurants. And that's what they've seen in certain studies that when they do an opt-in, it's not to inconvenience their customers, it's just, they know a lot of this waste is going straight from them into a landfill. So, they're also taking ownership of the waste stream.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Madam Chair.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Thank you, Representative Gresko.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. And with that, I don't see any other questions, but thank you for your indulgence and staying with us with all your input. We appreciate it.

JEANINE BEHR GETZ: Great. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time and consideration.

REP. BORER (115TH): Sure. Our next speaker is Kathy Flaherty who is here on behalf of Mary-Ann Langton. Did I say that right?

KATHY FLAHERTY: Thank you Representative Borer. Mary-Ann Langton is here, but I'd love for her to unmute and just say hi to all of you, because she's asked me to read her testimony.

REP. BORER (115TH): Sure.

KATHY FLAHERTY: Mary-Ann, do you want to unmute and say hi. She might not be able to. so let me just read.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. We see her though. Oh, there is she.

KATHY FLAHERTY: Yeah, you see her.

MARY-ANN LANGTON: Read it.

REP. BORER (115TH): There she is.

KATHY FLAHERTY: Yeah. Okay. So --

REP. BORER (115TH): Hi, Mary-Ann. We're used to seeing Mary-Ann in the House at the Capitol. So, you made it virtually. Thank you. Okay, Kathy, I'm sorry.

KATHY FLAHERTY: Okay. So, my name is Kathy Flaherty. I'm the Executive Director of Connecticut Legal Rights Project, but Mary-Ann Langton and I are both members of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance. And I very much appreciate the Committee's reasonably accommodating Mary-Ann by allowing me to read her testimony.

Hello, Co-Chair Cohen, Co-Chair Borer and distinguished Members of the Committee. My name is Mary-Ann Langton, and I live in West Hartford. I oppose this raised Bill 6502 for the following reasons. And I'm just going to interrupt for a second. It's only Section 3, that she opposes. The definition for single use straw can be easily misinterpreted, and two, the language is too weak when it refers to owners/operators may provide plastic straws to customers with disabilities.

Within the past two years, the majority of restaurants have begun using various types of eco-friendly straws. These are great but, as a woman with a disability with an involuntary bite, I cannot drink through these types of ecofriendly straws. Therefore, I would like this Bill to mandates that food establishments must provide plastic straws to people with disabilities upon request.

Plastic straws are an essential independent living tool for many people with disabilities including myself. I am unable to drink from a glass or cup due to my physical disability. I cannot hold a glass or cup and then bring it to my mouth without spilling

out all of the liquid. Therefore, plastic straws are an essential adapted device for my everyday living.

So many people have either given or told me about the metal straws. These straws are dangerous because of all my involuntary movements. The Cromwell Dental Association, where I go for my dental care, strongly advised me not to use these metal straws. They are fearful that the metal straws might break my teeth

In conclusion, I hope that I have shown you that plastic straws are a necessity in my everyday life and for other people with disabilities' lives. Please vote no to raised Bill 6502 and that's section three.

With the Committee's indulgence. I just like to give you my testimony, which I can do in about 30 seconds.

REP. BORER (115TH): Sure.

KATHY FLAHERTY: I co-sign what Mary-Ann said. You know when I hear people say things like, well, if you don't have a straw, you can just sit from the side of the glass. No, not everybody can do that. When we -- if this state can't figure out how to deal with disability so that people at high risk can get vaccines, we expect the state to deal with disability when it comes to people getting straws. So, they can drink.

The amount of waste that's getting generated because every vaccine dose uses plastic. The amount of medical waste I have generated now that I use a CPAP machine. People with disabilities in this state get ignored time and again when policy decisions are getting made, and it's not that we don't believe that everything else in this Bill is great. I'm delighted that you are finally taking some action against balloons. Nobody needs balloons at all. Period, full stop. You could ban balloons in life

would go on. Might be a little less fun, but life would go on.

But -- and I know this is not a ban on straws, but I can tell you from personal experience, if you go and you ask for a straw, the servers kind of give you all kinds of static. I put stuff in my written testimony about that. It's easy to say or they can just have it. They'll have it in the back, the full, they just don't. So, I heard the beep. So, my suggestion would just be take line 68 to 116 out of the Bill, and then you've got full support

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Thank you. So, what you're saying is that you support the Bill as long as straws are available if folks ask for the straw. So, in those towns that currently have BYO that don't have straws, is there a designation whereby when you go to that restaurant or that establishment, that you, that you know that they don't have straws?

KATHY FLAHERTY: I don't know, I don't live in those area, that area of the state, you're not going to see me drive from Hartford to a restaurant in New Canaan. It's just never going to happen in a million years. So, I have no idea what they do. what I would suggest is that do that education campaign and explain to people, if you don't need a straw, don't use one. You know, this Bill coming out before I used to get ice coffees at Dunkin' Donuts, we can talk about Uber Eats, so I might as well talk about Dunkin'. I used to get ice coffee at Dunkin'. But iced coffee, you need a straw to drink. You just can't. And so, I actually stopped getting iced coffee because I started making it at home. I could use my reusable cup. I don't have to get the plastic cup. I'm not getting the straw.

But the numbers that you get in terms of the stats, that big number that came out was a nine-year-old kid who called up a random company and somebody pulled that number out of thin air. There really is

-- The plastic straws are a very, very tiny part of the plastic waste in the world. And everybody sort of use it as like the gateway plastic, but it, you know, straws are things that people need. The other stuff they don't.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, I do have some follow-ups, but I'm going to defer to my Co-Chair Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Madam Co-Chair. And thank you so much Kathy and Mary-Ann for your testimony. And I did want to -- I feel compelled to apologize for that insensitive comments about drinking out of the side of a cup and I stand corrected and I appreciate that. My point was obviously, you know, that sometimes you leave a restaurant and don't have the tools. And it brings me to my question, I do have friends with disabilities that require the use of plastic straws. And again, to Mary-Ann's point, not metal straws because those can be difficult, although silicone straws seem to be acceptable for them.

But I do recognize from prior hearings that we've had on this matter, that having that bendable pieces advantageous, you know, for many of the disabled community that often comes with the flexible plastic straw. I would ask though many of them do carry their own straws. I wonder if that's commonplace in the community in the disabled community that requires plastic straws in order to drink their beverage. And then I do have a follow-up question to that.

KATHY FLAHERTY: This is Kathy. I appreciate the question, Senator Cohen. And I also appreciate the apology. I think most people say that and that's kind of the automatic reaction. There is a saying that people in the disabled community have about suggestions like, well, why can't you just carry it with you if you need it. They refer to that as a Crip tax, because it's yet another added expense

that a person with a disability has to take on to live in the world.

So, I would suggest that that is not the approach that I would like to see this Committee take. I would say, think about it again, educating people, If you don't need a straw, don't use one, don't take one. But they need to be available for the people with disability.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Kathy and that's sort of my follow-up with the way the legislation is written is such that the straws would continue to be available. So, I just wonder, you know, this is really, you know, if you're at a restaurant rather than, you know, we go to diners and we have those straws placed on the table automatically, and then they're discarded because they can't be re-used even if the customer doesn't use them. I just wonder, and I know you've spoken to this in past public hearings as well. What's the, if there's a suggestion that we could get to a place where we're not having restaurants automatically distribute straws that are perhaps unwrapped or can't be re-used if a customer doesn't choose to take it, but also keeps in mind the disabled community.

KATHY FLAHERTY: This is Kathy, I would say again, not having it -- not having it in legislation, I think it's reasonable to do an education campaign of restaurants, but I think Mary-Ann speaks to this when the original Bill came out a couple of years ago, when you really were talking about a ban, people stopped having plastic straws at their restaurants. The other problem with the language in your Bill is you actually say this doesn't prevent a town from having more restrictive legislation or more restrictive ordinances, which means towns could decide.

I mean, I remember Stonington was considering one. I find it interesting that they're not on your list, but I also remember waiting at the town people in

Stonington that contemplating a straw ban was showing they didn't care about the disabled residents of their town. So, I think the sooner more people in government realize that some of the policy decisions, no matter how well-intentioned they are hurt people with disabilities. And there's a lot of us out here and we see what you're doing.

I'm not -- and I don't mean like just you, I mean like the collective view. We see it, and it happens time and time again. And it feels like you have an array of people who are like getting things for doing their environmental work and all the work they've been doing. And I'm with you, when it comes to the bags, when it comes to the polystyrene containers, you know, honestly, when it comes to some of the other accessories. But when you're talking about a tool that literally was designed by a dad, because his disabled daughter was in the hospital and couldn't train while she was in her bed. I just wish you could go after the other stuff.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I appreciate it. Could I just also clarify for the record, that there's nothing in statute right now that prevents municipalities coming up with their own ordinances. So, we're -- you know, that's still something, with or without this legislation, towns can go ahead and implement a ban or a prevention of, you know, a distribution to some extent or another. So, I just wanted to clarify that. And I thank you so much for, both yours and Mary-Ann's testimony. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you. Thank you for being here, Kathy. I guess what I think I hear you saying is that, if you make it -- if we make it difficult enough to acquire a plastic straw, especially for the disabled, it actually kind of

goes down that road of violating the reasonable accommodations rules.

And, you know, I agree with you. I think since we've been having a conversation, I'm less likely to find a straw on a table than I was two years ago. I think the business community has recognized that they don't have to buy these, they won't, and if we make it difficult enough to get one, they won't have them at all. And so, it's more than likely that folks that need them are gonna be in a bit of a bind because if they're not available at the restaurant, and you don't have one with you, there is no real remedy other than someone filing a lawsuit.

I missed which line you suggested that we remove.

KATHY FLAHERTY: If -- I read it quick because I was reading the Bill on my phone while I was waiting to testify. Section 3 is lines 68 to 116, if I read that correctly. So, I just think that we'd be better served if the reference to straws was just removed from the Bill. I do hear what. I think it was Senator Cohen said about, not being able to stop municipalities from doing things. And I think that's true too. Hopefully, there are people from municipalities watching this, and realizing the impact that some of their local decisions have on people with disabilities who live in their towns, or people who live in other towns who may decide not to go to restaurants in those towns, because we don't think that that's a good thing.

You know, like for me personally, I don't need a straw, so I don't use them anymore. You know, I have lots of friends though, like Mary-Ann who do need them. And what you're basically saying is that Mary-Ann, and I cannot go to a restaurant together because I don't know that she's going to be able to drink while we're there. And, you know, I think we have enough limitations on our ability to participate in community life. And it would be nice to have one thing that we don't have to fight.

And frankly, the thought of somebody having to bring a lawsuit over straws is beyond frustrating. And I'm a lawyer. I hate the fact that we are stuck off and having no other choice, but to bring a lawsuit to enforce our rights. But, you know, 'cause I know that some of us have had conversations about that. But hopefully, nobody will literally have to make a federal case out of it. Cause that's what it would be.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Miner. I don't see any other hands for questions. So I wanna thank you both, Kathy, and thank you, Mary-Ann, for your testimony today, and for all your -- all your input on this topic. Thank you.

KATHY FLAHERTY: Yeah. Thank you. And thank you for letting me go now. I appreciate it.

REP. BORER (115TH): Sure.

KATHY FLAHERTY: -- 24, but you can go straight to 26 after. Take care.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Our next speaker is Thomas Lefebvre. I don't know if I said that correctly.

THOMAS LEFEBVRE: Perfect.

REP. BORER (115TH): But what is it? How do you say it?

THOMAS LEFEBVRE: It's Lefebvre, the B is silent.

REP. BORER (115TH): The B is silent. Okay. All right. Well, Thomas, you're up.

THOMAS LEFEBVRE: Thank you so much, Madam Chair, and the esteemed Members of the Environment

Committee. My name is indeed Thomas Lefebvre, and I'm the Coordinator at the Transport Hartford Academy at the Center for Latino Progress here in Hartford. And I'm here today to strongly support SB 931, AN ACT CONCERNING EMISSIONS STANDARDS FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY DUTY VEHICLES. Sorry. There are some clear benefit to SB 931.

The first being reducing pollution. We all have been on the highway one day, and we all have witnessed trucks producing clouds and clouds of black smoke. And that's a visible pollution. But what is target is reducing the smaller particles that are invisible to the human eye, and which are highly damaging to the human hairs.

And as a few of us have already mentioned, transportation is responsible for our last share of equitation in our states. We are also living in a state where many cities and many towns are divided by highways impacting localized inequality, and negatively affecting local communities.

There are multiple reported highlights that minorities are disproportionately affected by a pollution that there is an environmental justice angle in this Bill, which is why we are supporting it. There are some clear effects where you're seeing emission contracts, not just for those who live -- who are living between highways, but also for the truck drivers themselves who are inhaling a lot of particulars during their work hours. So had a few surveys on the negative impact of particles on truck drivers.

And I want to say to those who are claiming two different truck driver by opposing this Bill, that if they really want to defend the truck driver's health, they should, in fact, support this Bill. And to conclude, the technology is there. There's really no reason two way to use it. And, of course, there's really just asserting funds. We are very much eager to see the plans that the General

Assembly is going to outline in order to transition away from the use of internal combustion engines.

I know that we are going to talk about Transportation Committee initiative next week. But we are in a climate emergency that requires bold and fast action from our illustrators, who has outlined some ambitious targets in reducing greenhouse gas. So, the white house has outlined some very ambitious goals as well. We have rejoined price agreement this time to go further and faster on these issues. And I want to just thank you very much for your time, for listening to me. And I want to wish you good day. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Thomas. Thank you for all of your testimony. And I did see a hand up, but it went back down. But it's back up.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I'm sorry.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Sorry, Representative. I took down Representative Michel's hand raised --

REP. BORER (115TH): Oh, you took it down. Okay. By accident. Okay. That's fine. Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): I was wondering what it was happening to my hand. [foreign language] Thank you for joining us today. Just wanting to say thank you for testifying, and raising the point of environmental justice, which is -- there are the Bills that we're working on. And so I just wanted to say [foreign language] Thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. BORER (115TH): I don't know what you said, but thank you for your testimony and your question, Representative Michel.

THOMAS LEFEBVRE: Thank you very much.

REP. BORER (115TH): Yeah. Thank you, Thomas.
Truly appreciate it.

Okay. Our next speaker after Thomas -- Gaia, I'm looking for number 25. I see 26 is Nicole.

NICOLE RIVARD: Hi, I'm here.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: 25 haven't spoken. That was the one who spoke with number 23.

REP. BORER (115TH): Oh Kathy, we spoke, she was number 25. Okay, great. Okay, Nicole.

NICOLE RIVARD: Hi everyone. Happy World Wildlife Day. Unfortunately, we have a state wildlife agency speaking in written testimony on behalf of the hunting industry today. But I'm here to speak for Africa's big five for Friends of Animals. Trophy hunters want you to believe they're better than poachers because they have a permit from Fish and Wildlife Service to slaughter African lions, leopards, elephants, and rhinos. Giraffes currently have no protection under us law, so they don't even need a permit to kill them, to mount their head, or to make Western boots, pillows, and rugs from their skins.

However, it makes no difference to these species who are vulnerable to extinction and battling habitat loss and the bushmeat trade, if their killers have a permit or not. Cecil, the lion, didn't suffer any less because the American who shot him with the first arrow at 10:00 PM, July 1st, 2015, had a permit. Wounded, he was left for at least 11 hours before the hunter found him and finished him off with the second arrow. That was key because the hunter wanted a bow hunting record. And if a rifle was used, the record would be disqualified.

Trophy hunters kill for recognition like the African Big Five Grand Slam Award, not conservation. The Safari Club International's record book ranks biggest tusks, horns, skulls, and bodies. And make no mistake, Connecticut residents want bragging rights too. Since 2005, Connecticut residents have killed 71 leopards, 39 lions and a giraffe. They've also killed seven elephants who are ecosystem engineers.

The 2016 near-total ban on commercial trade and elephant ivory still allows Americans to import two elephant trophies per year. Let that sink in. Hunter's killing these keystone species essential to maintaining balanced ecosystems live in Greenwich, North Haven, Norwalk, Berlin, Westport, Stamford, Western, Eastern, Southington, and Middletown.

While they probably didn't travel in 2020. The big five still didn't get a reprieve. Since wildlife watching tourism flatline because of the pandemic, poaching sword, because the presence of visitors deters poachers. Uganda recorded 365 poaching incidents between February and May, more than double the same period in 2019. The irony is, if the money from trophy hunting made its way into African communities, like the hunter's claim, there wouldn't even be a need for poaching. It's often driven by poverty and desperation.

Trophy hunters, don't want you to know that non-consumptive community-based wildlife watching tourism is what provides incentive for conservation. It's a silver bullet for protecting African wildlife, not actual bullets. And also, permits don't make a difference to the offspring of the dead animals who must survive without parents to teach them about the harsh lessons of nature and avoiding conflicts with humans. Leopard cubs would normally stay with their moms for two years.

The pandemic has showed us how excruciating it feels to be apart from family when we need them the most.

Let's not be arrogant enough to think humans are the only species who feel this way. Thank you. Please support SB 925.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you so much, Nicole, for your testimony, and for all of your advocacy around this. I know we've seen this Bill, you know, before the Committee in the past. We've gotten it out of Committee. We've gotten it out of the Senate, and we hope this year we can get it out of both Chambers and to the Governor for signature. I see Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Nicole. Your neighbor, Friends of Animals, in Darien. You mentioned something at the beginning of your testimony. You mentioned another testimony, and I have to say to them also kind of shocked by a testimony that was submitted by the DEEP on Senate Bill 925 by Commissioner Dykes, well against a Bill talking about conservation. And, you know, I remember looking into poaching and corruption and money involvement in Southern African countries. And it seems a lot was omitted in that testimony. Can you comment and this testimony from Commissioner Dykes, please?

NICOLE RIVARD: Of course. You know, I feel like when it comes to pollution and pesticides and waste management, like DEEP is your agency, but I feel like with this testimony, it seemed uninformed, and like they didn't do their homework. They don't acknowledge, you know, what I already talked about, community-based non-consumptive wildlife watching tourism, and how it's actually protecting wildlife in Africa. Saying that there would be no money for conservation without trophy hunting is just simply a lie.

I have one example, there's Campi ya Kanzi in Kenya. They created a payment for ecosystem service where wildlife watchers pay a daily conservation fee earmarked to compensate local landlords for

livestock losses from predators. So consequently, in that community, the lion population is thriving. I can speak, you know, Friends of Animals is also involved with conservation projects on the ground in Africa. We talked to conservationists on the ground in Africa. You know, and I can guarantee you that the projects we're involved in that are actually making a difference are not funded by trophy hunters. I think that their testimony doesn't acknowledge that conservation is just more than anti-poaching efforts. It's about the reintroduction of species into their native habitat. It's about protecting habitat loss.

I feel like they don't acknowledge that when you put a price tag on these animals, it sends a mixed message about whether they need to be protected at all. And so our wildlife agency in Connecticut, can't be talking about and prioritizing money. It should be thinking about ecosystems and climate change and preventing, you know, the extinction of these animals, but also our very own extinction because it's all interconnected.

You know, I find it fascinating that with elephants and rhinos, they're responsible for, you know, their grazing maintains these grasslands in Africa. And these savannas are actually functioned as carbon sinks, which means, you know, it absorbs more carbon than it releases, and things like that are important. And I think, you know, their testimony not only just addresses that the animals that are shot dead, it's not thinking about all the animals that are left behind to deal with, you know, the mess that the trophy hunters make.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Including, I think -- Yeah.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Excuse me, Representative Michel. I am just going to recess the meeting momentarily. We're having a little bit of a technical issue, and some of the leadership of the Committee is unable to be in the room right now.

So, I'm just going to recess, and I will get right back to you, Representative Michel, as soon as I get the word that we're back and working.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Okay.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Yeah, it still won't let -- it will not let me in on the computer.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Shall we resume? Can you use your phone and try to work out the technical difficulty on the other end?

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Yeah, I'm certainly not trying to tie people up. I'm just -- I just don't know why it threw me off the computer. And so, I will operate with the phone, but I got to hold it. So I don't know if Gaia is on here or --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Hi Senator, I'm on with ITS on the phone. And it sounds like what you're saying is that you can't get on through your computer?

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Correct. When I go on the computer, it comes back to that note.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Okay.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): And so --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I wonder if you would close that down, and reopen it again. Could that help?

SENATOR MINER (30TH): I can try that. Sure. But what I'll do is I'll --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: What?

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Yeah, I'm still connected.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: What [Cheryl Smith] is saying is to log out of Zoom and log back in on the computer. Hold on. Log out of Zoom. And then just click the

link that was sent to you. And I can resend that to you. So you have it in front of.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): So should I log out of Zoom on my phone? Is that what you're saying?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: No, on the computer.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): So I don't have Zoom on the computer. And I am on the inbox. So all I'll do is go to, I guess, your email. There've been a few since then.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I can resend it, so you'll have it quickly in front of you. It will just take one minutes.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): If you would, that'd be great.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Sure thing.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thanks everybody for your patience. If we can just wait a few more minutes to make sure we resolve all the technical difficulties. We wanna make sure everybody is able to participate in the hearing. And if leadership can't be with us, that's problematic. So, bear with us as we get these things solved.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Just resent that over, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): I got so -- I'm just clicking on where it says "click here to join."

So there's a little screen that says "open Zoom meetings," and then there's the larger screen that says, "your download should start in a few seconds."

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Okay. Hopefully, we're in business.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I would hit the "open Zoom meeting." That's what I usually have to do.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: "Opens Zoom meeting." Yes. That's what ITS is saying as well. Thank you, Senator Cohen.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): So I just did that, and it still comes up with the same, "you are unable to rejoin this meeting because you were previously removed by the host," for not bringing cookies.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Right. I wonder -- Senator Miner, do you wanna [crosstalk] one of two things. We can continue in recess. You can hang up and work with ITS, and let me know when that's resolved. Or we can continue with you on your phone.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): I'm gonna leave the phone on, in the hopes that I can listen along. And then I'll just mute myself on the phone for now. And then I gather, I still have the "raise hand" option this way, so.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: You do. But Senator Miner, since you can't take a phone call or text from me right now, I just wanna say the ITS is saying that, on your upper left-hand corner on Zoom, to choose to log out and then you should be -- it should clear you. If it doesn't, we'll use the phone, but I just wanna be able to see how I can stay in touch with you.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): So this has launched Zoom Meeting.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: On the upper -- so maybe we should be in recess for three more minutes and I will definitely have ITS -- I'll be on the phone with you Craig, and we can talk, Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): All right. Okay.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): We'll continue the recess. And then, Senator Miner, if you can take that call from Gaia, and hopefully get it resolved.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Okay.

I'll just -- I'll just do it by phone.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Okay, the hearing is back in order. And we have Nicole Rivard, who is testifying right now. And I believe Representative Michel have a follow-up question.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you. Nicole, thank you for your testimony, and Happy World Wildlife Day to you. I have another question because you guys are really extensively knowledgeable on -- on this issue. I can't talk about the money that is involved. Some of them financed that might have been sort of mentioned in the -- in the testimony from Commissioner Dykes. But can you talk about what you know about what goes -- what's typical practices?

NICOLE RIVARD: Yeah, I mean, like I said, I felt like in terms of that testimony, some of it -- like, it was like, they didn't do their homework because it's easy enough now to, you know, read articles and talk to conservationists on the ground. You know, their testimony doesn't acknowledge that even the small, like, measly amount of money that might go into communities not -- it might never get there because of the corruption. And there was an example in 2019, the Community Resources Board in Zambia expressed deep concern over the fact that the communities had not been given their share of concession fees, or hunting revenues, since 2016.

So, let's just say we've -- you know, Brent Stapelkamp, he's a conservationist that studied

Cecil, and was the last person to see him alive. You know, he knows all this looks good on paper, but the reality is, some of these countries are the most corrupt on the -- you know, on the planet, particularly, Zimbabwe. And so, you know, if this -- if this was working the way it claims to on paper, you know, the species numbers wouldn't be plummeting. You know, they're calling now what's happening to leopards and giraffes the silent extinction, which is why we added draft to this legislation when we first introduced it; drafts weren't on there.

It's about, you know, doing -- doing things differently, and not letting the trophy hunting industry get away with this narrative that they've been getting away with pretty much up until Cecil was killed. I mean, the one positive thing that came out -- came from him, his tragic death, is that, you know, people started to take a look at this industry. And there's studies out there that, you know, prove that it's economically useless.

And, you know, at this point, you know, we feel like we want Connecticut to step up. We feel like these species are running out of time. But one thing I would -- last thing I would like to add that I feel like, the DEEP testimony doesn't address either, is that a federal ban has been introduced. And actually, I just yesterday got off the phone with Congressman Lou's Office from California, and they're gonna be re-introducing the Protect Act again, this Congress.

So, you know, I feel like, since we've been working on this Bill, you know, society is speaking up and saying that they're sick of this, you know. They don't buy with the trophy hunters have been trying to, you know, that perpetuate that myth. They're not buying that myth anymore, that without the money from trophy hunting, there would be no money for conservation in Africa. It's just simply not true. And Cecil's death raised awareness about that.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): And thank you so much, Nicole, for your testimony. And certainly, the Bill was certainly highly supported by the Connecticut Annual Advocacy caucus. Thank you for testifying, and thank you for your time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. I don't see any other questions. So, yeah, no more questions. So, thank you so much, Nicole, and thanks for being so patient.

NICOLE RIVARD: Thank you. It's an honor, you know, to see the Bill raised and to be able to speak about it for Friends of Animals. So, thank you for your support.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Next up, we have William Lucey from Save The Sound, followed by Ruth Canovi, [crosstalk] Everybody could just mute themselves; that'd be terrific. And this is a good opportunity to also say that we are not using the chat during these public hearings. If there is, for some reason, the need to get in touch with one of the Clerks of the Committee that is often acceptable use of the chat, but otherwise, we should not be using the chat for discussion during these Committee meetings or Committee hearings. So with that, Will, welcome. Thanks for being here today.

WILLIAM LUCEY: All right. Thank you. Thank you to all the Members of the Environment Committee. The technical challenges this year, obviously, just continue on through no fault of anybody's. I'll just briefly mention a couple of Bills and I'm gonna testify mostly about HB 6497. But briefly, SB 927 sewage right-to-know update, we're very close to final language. We hope to have that to leadership, tomorrow morning. We just had another meeting with DEEP today. Just hammering out a few more details on that. But the basis of what you have in front of you is going to stand.

And that as far as HB 6502 to single-use, I just wanted to mention. I was out with Representative Gresko a couple of weeks ago, checking on a tidal gate in my boat. And there was a balloon. Every time I go out, there was a balloon. So I really glad to see this as an omnibus Bill, which throws everything in. The comments about the straws notwithstanding, instead of a bunch of piecemeals. I thought that was a wise choice of the Committee this year. But what I'd really like to talk about is 6497 trying to get enabling legislation for Connecticut to have stormwater authorities.

The reason Save this Sound is interested in this is twofold. One is that, stormwater is the largest impairment to our surface waters and Long Island Sound. Cuz every time it rains, all the pollution goes in, and we have our 303D listings from the state, impairs recreation, fishing, shellfishing. So that's one reason we're into it. The other is simply the fact that we're gonna have a lot of resiliency issues. I submitted written testimony that included a road outside my house that was completely destroyed by a storm that lifted the blacktop off about an eight-inch storm. And the town didn't have that in their budget. It was an expensive repair. We lost a lot of roads in one storm. So if we had had the road set up where it was diverting stormwater off to the side, that wouldn't happen, saving the town a lot of money.

And I'll just, I guess, to capsule, I'll use an example from Maine where there was an industrial park with big box stores and welders, pipefitters, and right down the middle of it was a brook trout stream that was too impaired that brook trout in it. So they decided to form their own stormwater authority up there. They're called Utilities. They put a fee on themselves. They enacted close to a hundred different practices, porous pavement, trash traps, cutting into curbs, and redirect the stormwater to try and get the water quality to improve in the stream. And once trout can live in

there again, they're gonna reduce all those fees. So that sort of encapsulates what we're -- what we support here. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thanks so much, Will, for your testimony on this important piece of legislation. Are there any questions from Committee Members? Seeing none. Thanks for being with us.

All right. Next, we have Ruth Canovi or Canovi. I hope I'm -- please, correct me.

RUTH CANOVI: Ruth Canovi. But thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Welcome.

RUTH CANOVI: Thank you. So distinguished Chairpersons and Members of the Environment Committee, my name is Ruth Canovi. I'm the Director of Advocacy for the American Lung Association in Connecticut. And on behalf of the Lung Association, I speak to encourage the passage of Senate Bill 931, in relation to reducing harmful emissions from the medium and heavy-duty trucking sectors to protect the health of Connecticut residents.

Every Connecticut resident lives in a county that received a failing grade for unhealthy ozone days in the American Lung Association State of the Air report in 2020. Connecticut must continue to evaluate and then implement the most health-protective standards possible as we continue to make progress in cleaning our air and protecting public health. This is especially important when considering those living in communities most impacted by the burdens of poor air quality.

The trucking sector is a leading source of on-road pollution in Connecticut, contributing to smog and particle forming NOx emissions and carcinogen diesel particle pollution. These pollutants contribute to a wide range of poor health outcomes, including

asthma, heart attacks, strokes, lung cancer, preterm births, and premature deaths.

We also know that lower-income communities and communities of color often face a disproportionate burden of exposure and poor health outcomes due to transportation pollution. In order to achieve clean air for all communities, we urge you to move forward with this legislation to begin the process of assessing and implementing stronger standards. The benefits of California programs are well-documented and will provide for major reductions in pollution, do more productive engine standards while ensuring real-world emission reductions under all driving conditions over the lifetime of a truck.

We are also in strong support of Connecticut's participation in the multi-state MOU in pursuit of the transition to zero-emission trucking in the coming decades. Such a shift to zero-emission trucks was included in our report called the Road to Clean Air, which was released last year. We found that a widespread shift to zero-emission transportation, including passenger vehicles, buses, and trucks, could yield significant health benefits in Connecticut.

We urge you to support Senate Bill 931 to address a leading source of harmful pollution in the state, and to ensure that the combustion trucking sector becomes cleaner over time as Connecticut transitions to zero-emission technologies. So thank you so much for your time, and the opportunity to speak today.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Ms. Canovi. I appreciate your testimony. Any questions from the Committee? Seeing none. Thank you so much for being with us.

RUTH CANOVI: All right. Thank you. Take care.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Take care. Okay, next we have Jayne Mangan, followed by Elizabeth Raisbeck, followed by Steven Lake. Jayne, are you with us?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: And we don't have that. We don't have number 29 with us at this time.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. So, Elizabeth, are you with us? For some reason, we can't hear you. I don't see that you're on mute, but you're not -- your sound isn't coming through. Now, you're on mute. Let's see if -- you try unmuting yourself. No. I wonder if -- maybe we'll go onto the next person, and maybe perhaps try logging out and logging back in. Maybe that'll do the trick. I'm not sure why your sound's not coming through.

Okay. So we will move on to Steven Lake, and then we will try circling back to Elizabeth after Steven. Is Steven with us?

STEVEN LAKE: Yes, I am. I'm just trying to get --

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Got to move it up. Move it up for Steven.

STEVEN LAKE: Okay.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Welcome.

STEVEN LAKE: Committee Members, thank you for allowing me to talk today. My name is Steven Lake and I am the Plant Manager at the Americans Styrenics, or AmSty, for short, in Allyn's Point Site in Gales Ferry, Connecticut.

First, I want you to know that, just like you, I'm passionate about eliminating waste, in my plant and in the environment. And as a minimalist, I have a great appreciation for the fact that Connecticut's lawmakers are wanting to eliminate waste and reduce our carbon footprint. As someone who's participated

in beach and roadside cleanups, seeing the amount of uncontained waste is disheartening to me.

That's why I appreciate the investments and commitments AmSty has made to innovate and ensure that a circular economy for polystyrene is possible. This means all polystyrene products are infinitely recyclable, so they never need to be landfilled. That's our long-term vision at Amsty, where being good stewards of our environment is a priority and a commitment, and we take this action very seriously.

For example, at Allyn's Point AmSty plant, we produce several products that contain up to 25% Post-Consumer Recycle material, also called PCR. Since 2014, we have recycled more than 17 million pounds of PCR into foodservice packaging.

Since 2019, our Tigard, Oregon recycling plant has converted more than 1.5 million pounds of used polystyrene to all-new materials. That's equivalent to keeping more than 56 million foam cups or nearly 49 million takeout containers out of the landfill. And we have expansion plans to drastically increase our circular recycling capacity in the US.

Today more than ever, consumers rely on food packaging that's not only safe for the environment, but that has played a vital role in the midst of the public health crisis created by COVID-19. Polystyrene packaging is not just a matter of convenience. It's enabling restaurants to serve customers safely and affordably, in a time when businesses are strained in every way.

And compared to other materials and packaging, polystyrene is the most recyclable material based on energy, emissions, raw material usage, weight, and market value. Our attention, resources, and innovations are focused on the recovery, recycling, and reuse of polystyrene.

We feel the best path forward is recycling rather than plastics prohibition. Our focus needs to be on funding recyclable food packaging that meets evolving consumer demands for products that are environmentally friendly, safe, and protect consumer health.

I'm proud to work for a company that shares my values; that innovates and invests in recycling; and that demonstrates progress in a fully circular economy for polystyrene. That's why AmSty opposes Bill 6502, unless amended. Thank you again, and I welcome any questions you may have.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Mr. Lake. And thank you for your fast testimony, right within the timeline. I see Representative Dubitsky has his hand up for a question.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. You say that you oppose the Bill unless amended. In what ways would you suggest to bring in?

STEVEN LAKE: Just the removal of the polystyrene ban; foam ban.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And what do you suggest, if anything, that the legislature do with regard to polystyrene?

STEVEN LAKE: We support recycling, and you know, been getting a lot of press these days in the circular economy, so we would like to see our efforts go into the recycling of polystyrene.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And in what way could the legislature participate or help to ensure more recycling of polystyrene?

STEVEN LAKE: You know, it's a very good question. I'm not real sure how to do that other than making it available for people to recycle when they can. Right now, recyclers in the state do not take

polystyrene at all. And I'd like to see, you know, just kind of broadening that recyclability to polystyrene.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So what would you suggest? You know, we had a public hearing a week or so ago, and there was a -- there was a Bill up to have a sort of a mandate that the producers of propane tanks create a system where they take the propane tanks back, and that they -- they participate in the -- in the funding of the recycling of those tanks and that -- and that they -- that they participate in that in some way. Is that something that the polystyrene industry would be interested in doing, and coming up with some way that there is a system that starts at manufacturer and ends back at the manufacturer?

STEVEN LAKE: For the kind of foam products, it would be the, I mean, not the manufacturer of polystyrene, but the producers of the clamshells. Yeah. Having kind of a overall way to get those materials recycled back in collection of them, I think that builds circularity into the economy.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah. Well, that's the question. How do you do it? You know, I'm sure everybody here would love to see every piece of polystyrene produced recycled. I'm sure we would love to see every -- you know, you walk out of a deli with a salad in a little polystyrene clamshell. I'm sure everybody would love to see that recycled in some way. The question is, how do we do it? You know, we're -- I'm not a recycling expert. I'm not a, you know -- I don't know how that works. So if you are suggesting that we should be -- we should recycle more polystyrene, tell me how.

STEVEN LAKE: Well, I think it starts with creating a mechanism where it doesn't exclude polystyrene. And now, it excludes polystyrene. And you gotta have collection facilities. It's gotta be -- it's

gotta be a drive for it, but I think banning plastic doesn't really help that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So you're suggesting that the -- like when I -- I do my single-stream recycling into the big bin, and the town picks it up, and it goes over to Willimantic Waste, and it's sorted there. Are you suggesting that polystyrene be one of the products that is included in that?

STEVEN LAKE: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Have you -- have you or anybody from your industry touched base with any of the recyclers to figure out how that could be done?

STEVEN LAKE: We've had not officially, but I think there's -- you know, we talk to people in the local area, they just -- they just say, "Well, that's not on our list. It's not on our list to recycle those on our recycle containers that we have on plant." Yeah, I think it's a tough problem. I think it's a tough problem because you've gotta have the drive and the need for it. And then there's the recyclers and sorters need to be able to make a little bit of money from it too, I guess.

I don't think it's an easy problem to solve by any stretch of the imagination. I know that AmSty is trying to collect. We have -- what we do in Allyn's Point is we take post-PCR, and we put it back into products. But AmSty itself is taking plastics and turning it back into styrene. And I think, you know, collecting those and try and build that supply chain to get it back into a technology that converts it back into styrene is what we need to do. And I don't think there's any easy answer.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): How is it collected?

STEVEN LAKE: They have mostly collected the Tigard, Oregon plates, collected in Oregon locally. We're

trying to get other municipalities to supply their a polystyrene that we can take. It's a scale-up issue as well. What we're doing in Tigard is probably startup scale, not a world scale yet. But I think there's a lot of places that are trying to expand into that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, is it fair to say that there is a market for recycled polystyrene?

STEVEN LAKE: I think there is. I mean, there's a lot of places I know of ExxonMobil and some other big players that are getting into that technology so that they convert polystyrene back into styrene.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I'm suggesting more of like bales of recycled polystyrene. So, for example, if Willimantic waste is sorting out -- and I only use them because they're my local recycler. So if they're sorting out plastic bottles over here, and glass over here, you know, cans over here, and polystyrene over here and they make up bangles or bales or dumpsters or whatever they do, is there a place where they would be able to sell bails of recycled polystyrene if they were in that stream?

STEVEN LAKE: I'm not sure the supply chain for that, but I know an AmSty is interested in getting identifiers out to those locations. If you have foam and you don't densify, you're moving a lot of air around, and that's cost-prohibitive. But if you densify it, I think that's a way to get local areas to get their polystyrene to an area that will convert it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, if -- does your company purchase a post-consumer polystyrene?

STEVEN LAKE: Yes, we do. Yup. In the Tigard, Oregon facility, we purchase that from the local sorting company.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Would you be able to do that in Connecticut?

STEVEN LAKE: Right now, I don't know if there's a plan to expand that kind of -- you know, it's kind of localized and these. We're working in a place in Chicago arch population area. But I think, you know, if there's a big drive for it and a big need for it, it's possible. Right now, there's no plans to put anything in the new England area.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Oh, it seemed that a Bill that proposed to ban the substance altogether would be a pretty good incentive for your industry to -- to get on the ball and start -- start moving on that, don't you think?

STEVEN LAKE: Yeah. I -- without having a stream of recycled material that we can collect into. It's kind of hard to get the raw material. I mean, it's gotta be -- in Oregon, they collect id, and then we can take it into our facility that converts it back into styrene. So, I think it's the starting of a circular economy. I don't know if it's fully built out. But I think that like in circular economy and most of the things that we use in our daily lives are styrene.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, it seems like it would be sort of a chicken and egg situation where there has to be a market. Somebody has got to be standing there with a handful of dollar bills telling recyclers, "We will buy this stuff, if you start recycling it." They're not gonna push to include it into single stream. And they're not gonna start bailing stuff up and separating it out, unless they know that there's somebody who's gonna buy it. And if you are telling me that your industry buys this type of stuff, it just seems like -- otherwise, Bills like this, you know, are gonna go through. You know, it just seems that it makes sense for -- you know, we're not going to start a recycling program. It will be up to you. But I appreciate

your coming in and give us your answers. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for your time.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. Thank you, Representative. And Representative Chafee.

REP. CHAFEE (33RD): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for speaking with us today. I had many of the same questions as a Rep. Dubitsky. Kind of one follow-up, you said -- I believe you said, Oregon currently recycles polystyrene. Do you have any data? What percentage of polystyrene actually ends up being recycled in states that do recycle it?

STEVEN LAKE: I don't have that data in front of me, but it's a pretty small number if I remember.

REP. CHAFEE (33RD): All right. Thank you for your time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. And I don't see any other questions at this point. So thank you, Mr. Lake, for your testimony.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: And then, Senator Cohen, number 30 for Elizabeth, she's back on. So, I think, I did hear her, so hopefully, she's all set to speak.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Good, good. Welcome Elizabeth, you're up.

ELIZABETH RAISBECK: Can you hear me?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yes.

ELIZABETH RAISBECK: Oh, good. Senator Cohen, Representative Borer, and Members of the Committee, I am Elizabeth Raisbeck, co-chair of Groton Conservation Advocates and BYOGroton. And I just thought today, it might be helpful to you to hear our experience, and how we went by hoped getting an almost total ban on single-use plastic items.

Back in 2019 GCA Groton Conservation Advocates started having compensations with the Conservation Commission for the town of Groton. And they had decided to put out a survey to see what people thought about banning single-use plastic items. And they, I think, surveyed almost 500 people -- 408 some people. I have a wrong number in my written testimony. And the results that were extremely supportive. They had about 78 businesses, and the businesses were quite positive, and the rest were individuals.

So, the council with our support to decide to move forward with the ban. And they had -- they put actually a couple of Bills out before they settled on the final one, and had a couple of public meetings, and of course, a public hearing. And there was really no opposition to our ban, which includes single-use checkout bags, styrofoam; basically, all single-use styrofoam cups, plates, trays, plastic straws, and plastic stick stirs. The only opponent, whoever came to testify against the Bill, was Dunkin' Donuts. And it was actually, to our surprise, they weren't concerned about styrofoam because Dunkin' was already in the process of phasing it out. They were concerned about plastic straws. And for them, it was a cost issue.

So we were able to pass a very strong ban with very strong support from the town. And so, today, we just wanna speak in strong support of the Bill 6502, and especially want to know how important it is to include balloons, and urge you to ban the release of balloons. It seems to me that your legislation is written in such a way that it will be impossible to enforce the release of 10 or more balloons that you really -- there's really no reason not to just go ahead and ban balloons. They are death to the creatures in our aquatic environment. And a moment of pleasure is just not worth the devastation that may cause.

I also want to say we support the study Section 5 of your Bill to have a study on compostable materials, single-use -- single-use biodegradable bags.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I just interrupt for one moment. I just interrupt for one moment because the timer went off a few moments ago, and just that the three minutes is up.

ELIZABETH RAISBECK: Am I up?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: The timer has reached for the three minutes, so if you would -- if you wouldn't mind to wrap up, please.

ELIZABETH RAISBECK: Okay. Well, I'll wrap up there and just say, we strongly support Section 5. Lot of interesting composting at Groton, but it's very confusing as to what materials are appropriate at this time. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Ms. Raisbeck, for your testimony, and for, you know, BYOGroten and all the good work that's been done there in making progress for a cleaner environment. I don't see any questions from the Committee.

Honestly, I would just point, you know, as we're talking a lot about this Section 5 deal specifically with produce bags, but we will be, at a future hearing, talking about -- likely talking about compost and anaerobic digestion. We have a lot of Bills around waste that we've raised, and so that conversation will continue, I'm sure.

So I don't see any questions from the Committee. And I just wanna thank you for your testimony today. Thanks for being with us.

ELIZABETH RAISBECK: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Next on the list, we've got Amy Ewing, followed by Theresa Geary, followed by Laura Simon. Welcome, Ms. Ewing.

AMY EWING: Hello everyone. My name is Amy Ewing, and live in Stamford, Connecticut. And I wanna thank the Committee for the important work that you're doing. All the Bills that you're bringing forward are worth your time, our time, the state's time, in making improvements for our states.

I also would like to encourage you that, when this pandemic is over, you still keep a Zoom component, for those of us who can't maybe come from Stamford to spend the day in Hartford. Or last week, I was in testimony that I gave at 11:30 at night. So even though Zoom has its problems and its challenges, it does allow for more participation from more of your constituents, which I would encourage you to continue.

I was made aware of Senate Bill 925 by the Sierra Club. And I'm not representing them. It's just like they -- I support the Bill. When I submitted my written testimony, I focused mostly on the threat of poaching, and then the products that would come out of that poaching, like decorative items or so-called medical purposes that -- so-called, they have no efficacy.

I'm a volunteer docent at a zoo, and I'm not a spokesman for the zoo either. But through my docent training, I've become well aware of wildlife issues. And as a docent, I am an advocate for conservation. I understand the value that comes from biodiversity and from people finding ways like ecotourism to co-exist with wild animals, animals that contribute to the richness and the wonder of our earth.

One thing that I did not mention in my written testimony was the specific problem of trophy hunting. And I would like to point in contrast to a tradition in the Maasai tribes that goes back

hundreds of years, where it used to be a rite of passage for young men to have to go out and track and kill a lion. But NGOs have decided, "No, that's not the only way that you need to -- that you can show your strength and bravery." And they've actually come up with different trials. So, I would encourage trophy hunters to be similarly as creative, and thinking other ways of showing their strength and bravery.

The conservation of the big six African species -- And, oh, by the way, in my written testimony, I referred to tigers. They're in Asia. They're in trouble too. But I shouldn't have included them because they're not in the scope of your Bill. The conservation of the big six African species requires education to reduce the demand for these animals, their parts and trophies, and then laws to reduce the supply. And disallowing the import and trade of key African species, and prosecuting all violators can help reduce use the supply.

And then it's also important to protect the animals locally. And you wouldn't think that this Bill at first blush would help with local protection, but by reducing the amount of poaching, it keeps safe the rangers who help protect the animals from those poachers. And it helps there for the communities to be able to benefit from ecotourism that can bring well-needed dollars into their communities. So, I really ask that you raise the Bill SB - let's see. It changed its number. I'm sorry - 925. And let's do Connecticut's part to help conserve wildlife.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Well, that was good. You were right on the mark. I heard the alarm going off. So, perfect. Thank you, Ms. Ewing.

AMY EWING: You're welcome.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Any questions for Ms. Ewing? I don't see any questions.

AMY EWING: Could I make one other comment? Earlier someone made a comment about zoos. And I didn't know if you -- if everybody knew that AZA-accredited zoos, can't take animals out of the wild, unless it's a rescue situation. So, all zoos have species survival plans where they figure out how to breed animals that are farthest apart in their genetic makeup to keep as healthy, a captive zoo population, so that they can be used in education for local people to viscerally understand the value of conservation, and the value of keeping these animals in our world.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you for that clarification. I do see Representative Michel has a question.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you for -- Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Ms. Ewing. I'm from Stamford too, and so I really can say, I appreciate your testimony, and thank you for bringing the clarification. I also tried to clarify some of that information earlier. But you also brought up a very concrete points, and that was an excellent testimony. So I just want you to recommend you for that and thank you for taking the time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

AMY EWING: Thank you. Thank you all.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Thank you, Amy, for your testimony today.

Okay, next, we have Theresa Geary, followed by Laura Simon, followed by Dr. Regina Milano. Do we have Theresa with us?

THERESA GEARY: Yes.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Good afternoon. Thanks for being with us.

THERESA GEARY: Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Cohen, Representative Borer, Ranking Members, Miner and Harding, and Members of the Environment Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 6504. First, like to say that we greatly appreciate the work that the Department of Ag has done with this Bill and taking it to where it's gotten this far. We are also really positive about some of the changes in this Bill. The increase in funds to participating veterinarians is a great step in the right direction. Increase to the feral cat funding program is amazing. That work is necessary and important to continue the health of those cats in Connecticut. And a lot of the language clarification will make at the animal control officer's job, much easier.

We do have a couple of concerns. In Section 7, we are not inclined to support the recommendation of using 1963 municipal standards for groups that regionalized when they're building a new facility. It is -- they're 58 years out of date, and we need to come up with new standards and not keep relying on these old standards. So we're not in support of that. And we'd be happy to work with the Department of Ag and other groups to create new standards that are up-to-date, and not 58 years old.

The other section in which we have a little bit of a struggle is Section 12. We originally submitted some legislation to reduce the wound of unknown origin quarantine from six months to four months, for those cats -- those animals that fit a particular criteria, meaning they were -- the rule was identified in 96 hours, and a rabies vaccine was given to that animal and lessening that from six months.

The language that is in there now is suggesting that we need to go through a waiver process, which we do know exists. However, we would like it to just skip the waiver process and not put any more work on the Department of Ag, and just add that into -- the

determining agency can make that call based on the criteria that, that animal need. And we think that would make it a little bit of a smoother, more streamlined process. So again, we appreciate your help and your listening to this testimony. And we look forward to working towards these goals.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Ms. Geary, for your testimony, and for your work with the animals. I do have a question about that. That quarantine period -- our shelters and folks that are keeping these animals in quarantine, aware that there is a waiver process currently through delay?

THERESA GEARY: I'm not sure. I don't know for sure. But it's not necessarily really publicly announced that that exists. It is written on the rabies flowchart, that we all use when we're dealing with these animals. But it is in small print.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. So it's not typically something that's used at this point. So six months seems to be the standard because that's a lot.

THERESA GEARY: Yes.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. And when -- can you just clarify for me a little bit more on Section 7, what -- what you're asking for?

THERESA GEARY: Well, we're asking that -- if shelters are regionalizing, we're asking that they remove the Section that says, "If you're going to build a facility, use the 1963 standards for municipal facilities." We would rather remove that language just come out until new standards can be achieved. And then those regionalized municipalities can then build over the next handful of years as they see fit, but we aren't gonna build a facility that's outdated.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Can you tell me what in the 1963 standards would require updating at this point?

THERESA GEARY: Yeah, so there's -- not specifically, but there are some things in there that we have learned at animal welfare in this country over these years, that can create a much more environmentally friendly environment for those animals. That they're more behaviorally sound and not in a concrete kennel with gutter drains. They can be in a more comfortable setting while they're impounded for the period of time that they are. And we've learned so much with between architects and other agencies who've built updated facilities that are still capable of housing these animals, and yet maintaining disease control, and other things that are appropriate. So, it's time to take a look at the materials used. There are far better ones that are still easy to clean and maintain those animals. But certainly, the settings, some of these facilities have, with cats and dogs, very near to each other, we have an obligation to also maintain these animal's emotional wellbeing.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Right. And are you aware of anybody who's taken a look at that at those standards, you know, outside of the state and the agency [inaudible]? Have there been any working groups around that that you're aware of?

THERESA GEARY: There's some -- definitely some best practices out there. The association of - and I'll have to get the exact name to you - the of shelter veterinarians, the ASV, have written standards for - - this was done many years ago, but they're also updated and include the behavioral enrichment of these animals. So, they do exist. And many shelters around the country refer to those.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. I would love it if you could get those to me, and we could disseminate some of that information to the Committee. And just as we go to craft this language, we certainly don't want to have something that's outdated and cumbersome when we could have something that, as you

say is, more comfortable for the animals while keeping with all of the safety controls and standards that need to be in place. You know, I think that's important.

THERESA GEARY: Absolutely. We will get that to you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I appreciate that. All right. I don't see any other questions. So, thank you, Geary, for your testimony.

THERESA GEARY: Thank you for your time. Have a good afternoon.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You too. All right. We've got Laura Simon next, followed by Dr. Milano, followed by Louis Rosado Burch.

LAURA SIMON: Hello. Can I be heard?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yes.

LAURA SIMON: Great.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. Welcome, Ms. Simon.

LAURA SIMON: Thank you. Chairman Cohen, and Members of the Committee, I'm thrilled to be back to testify on behalf of the Connecticut Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, which is a statewide network of volunteer wildlife rehabilitators. And we are very concerned about House Bill 6504, because this Bill would change the uniformity of the definition of animal, and create a lot of confusion in the three chapters and the various sections that pertain to animal cruelty.

Annie Hornish of the Humane Society of the US already explained why this creates a big problem. But I wanna underscore that, the definition as it currently stands in all these chapters and sections

is defining animals as brute creatures, which may be archaic, but it is all-encompassing. And what this Bill does is change the definition so it only applies to domestic animals and some pet store species, which would leave out wildlife.

And unfortunately, we are seeing a sharp increase in wildlife cruelty cases from people who are deliberately catching birds, ripping out their feathers, leaving them to starve and traps, all kinds of horrible situations where we've had to call upon DEEP and animal control officers to intervene. And we really need them to remain nimble and able to follow through on these cruelty cases, many of which occur in the evening or on weekends, but they need to be able to prosecute and enforce the law. And when you start changing the definition of animals, and that some chapters that may apply to wildlife and some not, it just creates so much unnecessary confusion. And so we object to this Bill for that reason.

Additionally, in this Bill, normally, we'd support the sections that require that only licensed veterinarians can apply euthanasia. Obviously, that is the most humane and appropriate for domestic animals. However, if this section is being applied by an animal control officer, we need them to be able to euthanize wildlife in the field, and often the most humane way to do that is properly placed a gunshot to the head. They can't be trying to drag an animal to a vet, and we don't want them encumbered with thinking that is the requirement that would not be practical or possible. So we have concerns with that.

I also wanna briefly just mention our hardy support for SB 925 regarding the banning of body parts from six imperiled species. Obviously, this is a common sense and vital, an important Bill, and paves the way for Connecticut to play a key role in stopping horrific trade.

And we also hardly support House Bill 6502 regarding various plastic single-use items. We see so much wildlife that is not only entangled in plastics, you know, six-pack dividers and balloons. But they have ingested a lot of plastic products from the items named in this Bill. And they die a horrible death. It just blocks their gut. And it's just terrible to see an ended occurs to a far greater frequency than most people realize. So we strongly support this Bill because it will reduce all these harmful plastic items that are thrown out in the environment and definitely imperil wildlife. So, I did submit testimony, which I encourage you to look at, but I'm happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Ms. Simon, and Happy World Wildlife Day.

LAURA SIMON: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): And again, thank you for all of your help in rehabilitating wildlife. I see Representatives Dubitsky has his hand raised, followed by Representative Dillion.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Simon, for coming in and talking to us today. I wanted to talk to you specifically about your comments on the change in the definition of animal under 6504. I was interested to see your, and to hear your interpretation, that it -- that this change actually limits it to basically dogs and cats and some -- and some pet shop animals where we had the Commissioner of Agriculture indicating that this change actually expanded the definition to include all animals that ACOs typically deal with.

So, you know, I too had -- was confused by the change, but I couldn't tell really, if it was limiting it or expanding it. Clearly, there is a dispute. You seem to think it's limiting it, and the Commission seems to think that it's expanding

it. Can you explain to me why you think this is limiting?

LAURA SIMON: Yes. I'm referring to the definition of animal on the first page of Raised Bill 6504. And whereas previously -- I'm just taking it at face value, and I read it many times over and consulted with people. Whereas previously, it said "Any brute creature, including but not limited to, cats, dogs, blah, blah, blah, a lot of species." The new definition takes out that language, and puts in, "Animal means any domestic animal bred, born, and raised in captivity, including, but not limited to any cat, dog or other companion animal," list a number of them, and then it goes on to say, "or any bird amphibian fish or reptile offered for sale by a pet shop," but by stating -- taking away any animal and replacing it with any domestic animal that to me says, wild animals are not included in this definition.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Did you hear the Commissioner's testimony that there was -- there seems to be a typo for no better term throughout the Bill where the word "domestic" should have been removed, but was not.

LAURA SIMON: I heard that. So, my concern is, fine, if the word "domestic" is removed, then we're fine with that. But until that happens, this is of great concern. I thought he was also addressing that in some cases, domestic appeared and others it didn't. But he did not directly answer the question of whether wildlife would be included under the definition of animal or not. And so, we remain concerned till we see the language changed.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Which is actually a good segue into my second question, which is, you know, I -- I have, in my experience, animal control typically does not get involved in animal issues. I mean, wild animal issues. At least out here in Eastern Connecticut, if you've got a wild animal,

that's either a problem or injured, or, you know, anything, you call the ACO, and they say, "That's wildlife, that has nothing to do with us." My understanding is that, this change in definition is intended to focus more on what ACOs actually do. Which, in my experience is, they don't do wildlife. Is it your feeling that they should?

LAURA SIMON: Here's the way the situation appears to me; with injured and orphaned wildlife, wildlife rehabilitators work with ACOs. ACOs usually will not take in those animals, but they may refer calls to us. So they're not responsible for taking in injured and orphaned wildlife. But what this Bill concerns and what our concern is, is wildlife cruelty cases. And that varies from town to town. In some towns, animal control officers are told not to get involved in wildlife cruelty cases. In other towns, they're given free rein.

We've worked with a number of animal control officers on some wildlife cruelty cases. And we've worked with DEEP, D-E-E-P. But DEEP is often stretched thin, their officers are not available, and we've had some very good outcomes with animal control officers on cruelty cases. And just about every single one, we need urgent help right away, and we need to be nimble. And we have had some good outcomes. And I think the most -- the most notorious one involved drowning of raccoons in front of children by a nuisance wildlife control operator. And that case alone was taken up by the animal control officer and resulted in nuisance wildlife control legislation that the state now operates under, creating a better program for training and licensing nuisance wildlife control officer.

So, my short answer to your question is, we're talking about wildlife cruelty, and yes, some animal control officers in different towns do work on those cases. And we want them to continue being able to.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But if the definition on the first page is changed to include "wildlife," does that not give all ACOs the responsibility to now deal with them? You're saying that some do, some don't. If they are included in that definition, it would seem to me that they would all now be required to do that.

LAURA SIMON: No, that is not my understanding because the prior language, which said "any brute animal," was standing. And different towns had different procedures for whether or not they would allow their animal control officers to handle wildlife or not. So, no, this Bill does not dictate that. If you remove the definition, it will not dictate that they have to handle wildlife cruelty cases. Every town makes their decision on that. But by being included, if a town does allow their animal control officer to handle a wildlife cruelty case, that officer will not be hampered by a lack of understanding which law they need to use to follow up with a cruelty case, and whether there's restrictions that apply to domestics and not wildlife. You know, we're just saying, keep the definition of animal uniform. Keep it inclusive, and let the towns decide what they wanna do.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, thank you for that. I think my last line of questions is about your understanding of the limitations on euthanization. If you were listening, when I was asking the Commissioner of Agriculture about this, I also interpreted it. And again, I was not able to point a specific line, but it seemed to me like the Bill is limiting euthanization to veterinarians. And I was -- it was my feeling that it should not be so limited because there are other instances when other people do need to dispatch an animal to be the most humane. Can you point to a specific place in the Bill that gives you the interpretation that I also had, that it limits it to veterinarians?

LAURA SIMON: Well, I just looked at the language, and the language seemed -- in the Bill seemed to state that "any euthanasia of an animal under this section would have to be done by a licensed veterinarian." So it just seemed to me that -- let's see, that it referred to such officer, whereas before it said, "may humanely destroy, or cause an animal to be humanely destroyed." It's now says, "may have such animal humanely euthanized by a licensed veterinarian." So it seems that, if a licensed veterinarian is not available, their hands are going to be tied.

What are they going to do with a drastically suffering animal, a car-hit animal, an animal that's mortally injured and suffering? Do they -- are they able to use the CO2 chamber, gunshot to the head, or do they have to go to a vet? And we all know, on weekends and after hours, really your only option there are these 24-hour services. And most of them will not see wildlife and, you know, may or may not be available to humanely euthanize an animal for an animal control officer.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I think, you and I interpreted it the same way. Hopefully, the department picks up on that and suggest some changes to make sure it's clear that -- that all animals that are in such condition don't need to wait for somebody to, you know, drive 20 miles on a weekend evening to euthanize. I appreciate your coming in, and thank you for your responses. And thank you, Madam Chair.

LAURA SIMON: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. And I do just wanna point out, because this has come up again, that issue with the word in the Bill, "domestic." I went back and checked on it, and this is not something that is LCO's fault; this is a language that was provided, and that word was not bracketed, so it was just -- it was done as

requested. And so we'll have to make those corrections going forward, and I'm glad it was all brought to light. That's the purpose of the public hearing process, but just wanted to clarify that as we move forward. Representative Dillon, did you still have a question? Or are you all set now?

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you, Madam Chair. I was concerned about raptors actually, and how they -- how they would be treated under the current language. We have a lot of competition for space, I think, unless Ms. Simon would like to clarify that -- that the discussion with Representative Dubitsky may have eliminated part of the problem here. But I haven't heard as much conversation about birds, and that's kind of -- they're kind of big where I live, you know, ospreys and I know I live in a city, but we -- we have a lot of -- a lot of wildlife and raptors.

LAURA SIMON: Right. Right. Well, technically, wildlife rehabilitators in this state can handle injured and orphaned animals. Raptors fall under a federal permit, and because they're a protected species. So we have specially designated wildlife rehabilitators who handle them. If they're hit by a car, anything happens. We have a phone number, but you can reach us through DEEP, and you can go online, Connecticut Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, and you can locate a rehabilitator.

Most of our members are home-based, which means, you know, they're available pretty much all the time and can help out. But again, something like this, if there's a cruelty case, or say it's a Raptor hit by a car, we want -- and that animal is suffering. Usually, when birds are hit by cars, there's so much internal damage, there is no recovery option. And if that animal is suffering, we do want that animal control officer or police officer, or DEEP officer to be able to humanely dispatch the animal.

And I'll give you an example. I was involved in a case where actually somebody tried to get a raptor, a hawk, out of a tree, and they couldn't get the hawk, he was tied up in string, and they couldn't get him out of the tree, and so they just cut his legs off to get them out. And I arrived on the scene, and I was horrified, as you can imagine. This bird is suffering, he lost his legs. I mean, this person was well-meaning, but I don't know what the heck they were thinking. But that animal needed to be euthanized immediately. It was a weekend, and we needed to. We couldn't take this animal to a vet, wait in line, trying to find a vet. You know, we had to utilize the services of the local police immediately. It was a horrible situation. And not likely one you're ever going to hear about again.

But just underscore, there are sometimes emergencies. We always opt to use licensed veterinarians, wherever possible. Rehabilitators do not want to euthanize animals themselves, or have anybody else do it. So we work closely with vets. And we do -- most of the time, when we have to euthanize an animal, it's only with our veterinarians. That's our preferred option. But sometimes you have these crises, and you need to go to other means.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Actually, thank you, Madam Chair, for noticing my hand was up because that about the raptors is interesting.

LAURA SIMON: Yeah.

REP. DILLON (92ND): -- that we knew that here. Thanks.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. And thank you again, Laura, for your testimony. I appreciate you being with us today.

LAURA SIMON: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Dr. Regina Milano, followed by Louis Rosado Burch, followed by Joseph Mullin. Dr. Milano, are you with us? Oh, I think you're on mute. Welcome.

DR. REGINA MILANO: Good?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Perfect. Yeah.

DR. REGINA MILANO: Okay. Good afternoon, distinguished Chairs and Members of the Committee. I'm here today to testify regarding HB 6504. I strongly oppose redefinition of the word "animal" CGS 22-327. I support increased funding for feral cat grant program. I support changes to the rabies quarantine period. I support SB 925, big six trophy hunting ban. I support HB 6502 restricting plastics and helium balloons.

I'm a science teacher and biology professor and Connecticut wildlife -- licensed wildlife rehabilitator. I hold a doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies, and we studied the use of language in policymaking. In my years, lobbying for animal-friendly legislation, I've been concerned by the diminish effects of subtle language changes to animal-friendly Bills, both at the state and federal level. And I'm disheartened by the lack of fidelity to the integrity of our words.

It's one thing to architect Bills that may compromises and something altogether different to bastardize words by arbitrarily redefining them. Biologists have proven that animals have intelligence, communicate their -- communicate, and share the same range of emotions as human animals. We must not tolerate language that fails to demonstrate compassion and empathy for all, not simply animals, as it pertains to a political agenda. Redefining the word "animal" in this case, undeniably sets precedent for weakening animal cruelty laws long-term, and may increase acts of cruelty against animals.

I strongly oppose redefinition of animal because it would remove wildlife and community cats from protections. These issues facing cats are not of their own doing, but rather the negligence of humans. And it is unjust to impose such harsh punishments upon them, the victims, and all too common theme where animals are concerned. I support increased funding for feral cat grant program and increasing reimbursements to veterinarians participating in the APCP at an increased to 20% of APCP income being used for feral cat grant programs.

Furthermore, as a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in the state of Connecticut, I oppose the redefinition of the word "animal" based on horrific situations I've encountered involving wildlife. Animals have come into my rehab with bullets embedded in them, languishing for days before being found or reported. One man baited area wildlife with the intention of eating them. A witness noted that the man often left these animals in crates, outdoors without protection from weather. If you're not directly involved in the animal welfare arena, and may be difficult to imagine the heinous acts committed against animals. But these malicious acts are more common than many imagine. We need greater protections for animals, not fewer.

To arbitrarily redefine the word "animal" would be an act of speciesism. Discrimination in favor of one species, usually the human species, over another specific -- especially in the exploitation or mistreatment of animals by humans. Philosophers have argued that there's a normative relationship between speciesism and other prejudices. And psychologists suggests that speciesism relies on similar psychological processes and motivations as those underlining other -- underlying other prejudices. We must be better than this. With your help, we can. Thank you for your consideration.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Dr. Milano. I appreciate your testimony. I see my Co-Chair, Representative Borer has his hands up.

REP. BORER (115TH): Yes. Thank you, Senator Cohen. I want to, of course, thank you, Dr. Milano for coming and testifying today. I am long familiar with Regina's work and her advocacy, and it's very admirable. So, thank you for coming, and all your advocacy. In the beginning of the day, which seems like yesterday, we did have the Commissioner of [inaudible] talking about the definition of animal, and feral cat did come up, and it was the intention not to exclude feral cat. And we've had more discussions over the definition of animals. So, I think this is going to be conversation that continues beyond the public health -- beyond the public hearing. And your input is valuable. So we're gonna take back all this feedback and revisit the definition of animal.

DR. REGINA MILANO: Thank you very much. That's appreciated. And it would be wonderful to see that legislation in written form. Thank you so much.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. Thank you, Regina.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. I don't see any other questions from the Committee. So I thank you for your time and testimony.

DR. REGINA MILANO: Thank you so much.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. All right. We've got Louis Rosado Burch, followed by Joseph Mullin, followed by Nathan Frohling. Welcome, Louis.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Thank you, Senator. Can you hear me?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yes.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: All right. Thank you so much. Good afternoon, Honorable Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and Rank and File Members of the Environment Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Louis Rosado Burch, Connecticut Program Director for Citizens Campaign for the Environment, and to be testifying today in support of Senate Bill 927 and House Bill 6502.

On 927 revisions to the sewage Bill, right-to-know law. You know, we strongly support updating and strengthening Connecticut's right to know-law-to law to protect our surface waters and our public health. Our state continues to suffer from raw, and partially treated sewage overflows as a result of outdated sewage treatment infrastructure. This includes a sewer line failure in Hamden in June of last year, which resulted in the upwards of 2 million gallons sewage spill into the mill river and New Haven Harbor. And despite existing requirements under the law, downstream communities, New Haven, were not notified in a timely manner, leaving the public unawares to potential health hazards for several days after the spill.

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has been working on a series of updates to the existing sewage right-to-know portal to create a more user-friendly experience. CCE has been a part of these ongoing discussions along with Save The Sound. Representative Reyes and some others, we are supportive of the substitute language that DEEP is recommending, including leveraging existing social media tools, such as Twitter or other available electronic platforms, as a means to push messages out the public. The error [inaudible] gallon threshold for reporting spills, and requires reporting whenever a sewage spill reaches a water body. We think that that makes a lot of sense, acknowledges that, any spill that reaches a water body may present a public health risk.

And we also recognize that clear consistent signage is needed in areas where the public is likely to come in contact with contaminated water. That signage needs to be conspicuous with clear directions, and must offer bilingual advisories at a minimum.

Regarding House Bill 6502 CCE remain supportive of state-local efforts to eliminate food packaging made from polystyrene to promote the use of reusable straws and tableware, and to prohibit the reuse -- the release of helium balloons that ended up in our waterways. Excuse me. For many of the reasons that we've heard several times today, these materials contribute to plastic ocean pollution, threaten our wildlife and take up one necessary space in our solid waste stream.

Polystyrene, as you've heard today, is not currently offered for a recycling by any of the municipal recycling programs. That means that new polystyrene packaging is primarily manufactured from virgin materials. Polystyrene garbage is almost universally disposed of as municipal solid waste, which once again, contributes to growing solid waste management costs for cash-strapped municipalities.

And CCE supports phasing out the use foam lunch trays for educational institutions, we do recommend that the requirements of Section 1 be accelerated to implement the phaseout as soon as possible. Additionally, we recommend moving the effective date of Section 2 to prohibit the distribution of polystyrene food service containers no later than January 2023. It's important to point out that cost-effective alternatives to polystyrene food packaging exist, and are already widely available and in use.

And while it may be necessary to provide academic institutions with some time to discontinue existing contracts there is precedent for this phase-out, and the replacement of polystyrene products need not be

delayed longer than necessary. We think that a six month to one year phase-out is ample reasonable time to give retailers a time to use up their inventory. And we'd like to point out that New York State actually has passed a comprehensive ban on polystyrene food packaging that passed in April of 2020 with phase-out --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Excuse me. I just need to interrupt. Just reset off the timer a few times. And I just want to let you know that the three minutes was over.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Sure. Appreciate that. Just so, you know, we can't hear that from here. But I appreciate you letting me know.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Okay. Thank you.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: So again, you know, I'd just like to close by saying, you know, a number of municipalities have already taken steps to reduce styrofoam, including local ordinances in Groton, Norwalk, Stamford, and Westport. We feel strongly that any statewide ban not preempt municipalities from passing their own ordinances. We believe that, you know, when putting measures in place to prevent what wasteful plastic pollution, the state should provide a baseline of protection and not a ceiling. And so, I'll conclude my comments there and happy to answer any questions that Committee members may have.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thanks for that. I appreciate it. I see Representative Borer has her hand up. Maybe she doesn't --

REP. BORER (115TH): No, I'm sorry. That was my hand up from before. Somehow, it can't go back down. But while I have you, thank you, Lou, for being here. And ditto, I concur with everything you've said. How's that?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Thank you for your support.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Lou, as always, for your great testimony. I'm just [inaudible] stirrers keep coming up. At least on my side. I was just wondering, what's the deal with stirrers? Can we -- is any industry like, been fighting -- adding stirrers to the Bill, or is there any drawbacks? Or, could it jeopardize, or anything? Just curious cause I think stirrers are probably even less used than straws, but that's my impression. And then I was thinking that it would be a good idea to maybe add it to the Bill. What are your thoughts on this?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Appreciate that, Representative Michel. We would agree that this is somewhat of a low-hanging fruit. The Bill does not make any mention of plastic stirrers. These items are infamously used for a few moments at a time and are not easily recycled. In fact, I think, most folks in the Committee know that any plastic waste or any other type of waste going into the single-stream recycling program, that's bigger than about a -- or smaller than about the size of a dime, quite literally slips right through the cracks. And so, those materials are typically disposed of as waste.

We have recommended in our testimony amending the language to include plastic stirrers in the definition of single-use plastic straws to prohibit their distribution -- or to prohibit their distribution altogether. Norwalk is another municipality that has passed a legislation regarding straws, and actually the Norwalk law ordinance rather does contain an outright prohibition on plastic stirrers. And so, we think that's appropriate.

We've also recommended in our testimony that, along the lines of what you need from BYO recommended earlier that the Bill be amended to apply the same requirements to plastic tableware as it would impose upon single-use plastic straw. And further that the language be clarified to apply to take out and delivery orders in addition to dine-in patrons.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): And thank you very much for that. And then just for clarification - I'm struggling with my computer today - but in the polystyrene, in a EPA, in the polystyrene products, what products are actually included, did we -- we did include all schools, is that correct? Or is there some limitations?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Based on my -- there may be limitations to that, but based on my reading schools, school districts, and institutions of higher learning would all be included in the requirement.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Okay. That was just for [inaudible]. Thank you. Thank you, Lou. And thank you, Madam Chair.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Representative Dillon.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thank you, Madam Chair. Hi, Lou, it's good to see you.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Well, thank you.

REP. DILLON (92ND): If I understand your testimony correctly, first of all, it's good to hear that you're -- that you're tracking the incident at the Mill River. It was the --, and I thought that everything was getting resolved the summer, but then I was confused by testimony this morning. It's your

position, though, that you support the language that's before us?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: We've -- we've signed on, in support of the substitute language that DEEP is going to be offering, or may have already offered up to the Committee. You know, once again, we -- you know, we've actually been in conversations with DEEP about this issue since 2011. We're one of the -- one of the groups that work to get the law established in the first place. And there have been -- there's been a need for updates throughout this process. This is probably about the third amendment to the law to strengthen and to further clarify some of the responsibilities on municipal CEOs and what have you.

So, at the time when the law was initially passed, we were advocating for a real-time public notification system that could push alerts out to personal electronic devices. What we ended up -- what the legislature ended up passing was essentially an electronic portal where wastewater treatment operators could report these type of spills electronically, versus the paper by fax system that was in place previously.

And it became clear at that time -- at that point in time, that there was a great deal of work that needed to be done in terms of modernizing the reporting system, getting to where New York is at. And it became clear that there were some limitations, you know, financial resources, not being the least of them, and technical ability to meet some of those requirements. And so, at the time, we thought it was a good first step in the right direction. We recognized that we would need to come back and readdress some of these issues over time.

And to DEEP's credit, they have -- you know, they've been very diligent in terms of, they've identified a new contractor to help overhaul the existing system.

And, you know, there's been a great deal of dialogue, including recommendations that we the advocates have made for steps that they can take in-house within existing resources. You know, there have been some areas that we would like to see them go farther, but considering that they have really been working with us on -- you know, what I believe is a good faith effort to improve the system. We think that this is a good -- a good step in the right direction.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Okay. Then I'm still -- are you expecting there will be new language brought forward, or are you supporting what's in front of us today?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: We, once again, are endorsing the language that DEEP is submitting. I may have already submitted to the Committee. I'm not quite certain.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Okay. Okay. Thanks a lot.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Thank you.

REP. DILLON (92ND): Thanks for what you do.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative Dillon. All right. I don't see any -- Representative Demicco. Did you have a question, Representative?

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Yes.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yeah.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Thank you. Madam Chair. I'm incognito for a couple of minutes here, cause I'm bouncing around. So thank you for your forbearance. I do have a question for Lou Burch, if he's still available.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Good afternoon. Yes, sir.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Hey Lou, how are you?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: I'm doing very well. Thank you.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Good, good. So, Lou, I just wanted to ask you a question about 6502. So, at the very end of the Bill, it talks about the study of the single-use plastic bags. You're familiar with that?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Yes, sir.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay. So, the language that I'm looking at, unless I'm misinterpreting, it, seems to indicate that that DEEP is going to accept an application on behalf of a single manufacturer of a single-use produce bag. Is it just one manufacturer? And if so, does that make sense?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: To be clear, I think that what you all have offered in terms of compostable bags and a review of those types of materials through case, an independent inquiry into these materials make sense. My understanding is that this section would not limit this opportunity to one producer. And again, we think that this is a reasonable compromise. There's been a great deal of discussion about this issue. We have had conversations with the folks here in Connecticut that are producing these materials [inaudible]. We've also had some discussions with some of the composters that are on the ground doing this.

Look, you know, we recognize, we absolutely need to move away from single-use plastics and look for as many opportunities to do this. We certainly do not want to stand in the way of research and innovation, but we believe that this offers a reasonable to those companies to provide the state and the academy

of science and engineering with the relevant information that they need to prove their case, demonstrate that their products behave, you know, as advertised in a variety of environments, and are safe for distribution.

We have, in the past, had concerns and continue to have questions about the management of those waste products. And so, I would agree that ample public education is necessary before we begin transitioning to a new type of plastic material. But as far as -- as far as we're concerned, you know, the Academy of Science and Engineering, they have the resources, and they have the tools necessary to look at these materials in an independent way, and we're supportive of that.

As a whole, I think the Bill makes a lot of sense. You know, we've offered up some recommendations to strengthen some of the other pieces of it. And we hope that the Committee -- but regardless, we hope the Committee will move forward with this Bill as laid out.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Lou, I appreciate all that. And, you know, I appreciate everything that you said. But the one thing that I'm -- again, maybe this is directed more towards the Chairs than it is towards you. I'm looking at the language on lines 127 through 129 of this Bill, 6502, it says that "the Commissioner of DEEP shall accept an application on behalf of a manufacturer of a single-use produce bag." Wouldn't it be more appropriate to say "an application on behalf of several manufacturers of single-use produce bags," or am I missing something?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So if I may jump in, because this language was not provided by Mr. Burch, nor any of the Advocates who have been asked this question.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): The intent of the language is to allow an application from a; any manufacturer; a manufacturer of a single-use produce bag to be tested for compostability. We can certainly talk, Representative, if it makes you feel better to say "any," instead of "a," the intent of the language is to allow any manufacturer who chooses to submit an application to the Department, and therefore the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering, you know, for testing of compostability, be allowed to do so.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay. Fair enough. I appreciate that, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Thank you.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: We think that makes sense. And we're comfortable with that as well, Senator. And thank you for your question, Representative.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay. Thank you. Appreciate it.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Sure. And next, we have Representative Dillon, followed by Representative Reyes. Representative Dillon, did you have a question?

REP. DILLON (92ND): No, I didn't, Ma'am.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. All right. Thank you.

REP. DILLON (92ND): My Zoom has been freezing.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay.

REP. DILLON (92ND): I'm good enough here. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Sure. Representative Reyes, you're up.

REP. REYES (75TH): You, Madam Chair. Simply, just want to thank Mr. Burch for his spirited advocacy, and always being an available resource for us when we call. And I stand in support of the -- most of the Bills that he testified in support of. And I wanted to say that the -- that sewage spill right-to-know is -- we've grown -- we've grown a lot since the last few changes. I just had a question for Mr. Burch. We just had his spill back again, in the [inaudible] river. And just out of curiosity, wanted to know if that -- how did that work electronically? And how did you know prior to reading it in a newspaper or hear it on the radio?

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: No, sir. Admittedly, I was not -- I was not aware. So I would have to look at that and can certainly follow up with you and other Committee members offline on that particular spill. As you know, there are a number of areas that have chronic sewage spill issues. And again, the whole intent of this legislation is to help provide additional, you know, leverage to the public and additional transparency with respect to how you know, those spills are reported. So my hope is that, that this will help to further clarify those types of incidents in the future, but I don't have specific information for you on that Bill -- on that spill at this time.

REP. REYES (75TH): Nope. Thank you, Mr. Burch. And again, thank you for your advocacy and for testifying here today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. And seeing no further questions. Thank you, Mr. Burch, for your testimony. Appreciate you being here.

LOUIS ROSADO BURCH: Thank you again.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Next, we have Joseph Mullin, followed by Nathan Frohling, followed by Cyrus Baird. Welcome, Mr. Mullin.

JOSEPH MULLIN: Madam Chair, am I coming through okay?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yes. Hear you loud and clear.

JOSEPH MULLIN: Perfect. Thank you. Good afternoon, distinguished Chairs, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and honorable Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Joe Mullin. I'm a registered lobbyist in the state of Connecticut. I'm from Grafton, Mass, and I'm the Northeastern State's Assistant Manager for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. The 501-C3 non-profit I represent for you today.

I would like to express my opposition to Senate Bill 925. I've also submitted a sign-on letter of opposition to the Committee, which saw participation from numerous other organizations. But for right now, I'd just like to touch upon some of the high-level points within my time.

I'd like to start off by recognizing the challenges associated with developing policies that regulate the take and trade of wildlife across multiple administrative and regulatory jurisdictions primarily through the lens of international trade and commerce. However, Senate Bill 925 poses to have far-reaching and unintended consequences that will negatively impact the conservation of the very species that the Bill intends to protect.

This Bill will also adversely affect the people in the communities that rely on the much-needed tourism dollars generated through legal hunting. In the United States, we're fortunate enough to have the guiding principles of the north American model of wildlife conservation to protect and promote the

sustainable use of our fish and wildlife resources. These principles are possible through the American System of Conservation Funding, a user, pays public benefits system which provides the necessary funds for implementing professional science-based fish and wildlife management throughout the nation.

However, across the world, you know, many African nations included legal regulated hunting is the primary driver for conservation funding, wildlife management and anti-poaching efforts. These hunting programs have been established to allow a limited sustainable off-take, and to generate funds for conservation anti-poaching and community incentives.

The final point that I'd like to make, or highlight here, is that we have established a case law and the books regarding legislation such as this. Looking back to 2016, New Jersey passed Senate Bills 977 and 978, which prohibited the important possession of items from certain lawfully hunted big five species. The state was then sued by several organizations who argued that this ban was preempted by Section 6F of the Endangered Species Act, and the presiding federal district court quickly on our judgment against the state, ultimately overturning the bans.

I know I have to wrap it up here. But I would just like to also highlight that in 2018, former Governor of California Edmund Brown stepped in to veto similar legislation that would have established the iconic African Species Protection Act reasoning that this legislation would have imposed a state civil penalty on activities expressly authorized through the ESA, emphasizing that the Bill would have been unenforceable. In consideration of these reasons, I would just like to reiterate my opposition to Senate Bill 925. I'd like to thank you for your time.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Mr. Mullin, for that testimony. And can I ask you to clarify? You mentioned that the Bill would promote -- well, actually, create negative consequences to the

species. Can you just expand upon that a little bit? In what way would there be negative consequences to African Species in particular?

JOSEPH MULLIN: Absolutely. And the funds for that, you know, are spent on international hunting, such as this. Those funds go towards funding actual anti-poaching teams, giving them the ability to hire more members, you know, and really have the latest technology and equipment to get out there and protect these species. Because, you know, poaching and hunting are two separate things. And it's a constant battle to try and, you know, put poachers in prison where they belong.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So it's your position that we should continue to allow for the hunting of these six species in particular, primarily because of the dollars they garner that then go to anti-poaching efforts?

JOSEPH MULLIN: Also with assisting these nations in having a sustainable population as well.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Of these particular species?

JOSEPH MULLIN: Yes.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I was going to ask the same question you just asked, so I will reframe. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Thank you, Representative. Any other questions for Mr. Mullin? All right. Seeing none. Thank you for your time and testimony today.

JOSEPH MULLIN: Thank you as well.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Next up, we have Nathan Frohling, followed by Cyrus Baird, followed by Joe Sculley. Welcome, Nathan.

NATHAN FROHLING: Good to be here as always. Dear Committee Chairs, Ranking Members, and honorable Members of the Environment Committee. I am Nathan Frohling, director of External Affairs for the Nature Conservancy. And I'm pleased to express our strong support for HB 6497, enabling Connecticut municipalities to create stormwater authorities, if they choose to.

We're very excited to support this bill because stormwater authorities are a fair and effective tool for helping address the serious issue of stormwater management, and an issue that is only going to become more serious in a changing climate.

Stormwater runoff is one of the worst problems affecting our lakes, rivers, and Long Island Sound, contributing to violations of water quality standards, and low oxygen dead zones, among others. Our region loses hundreds of beach days a year, millions in tourist income, and water-dependent businesses are adversely affected as well. Storm runoff also causes flooding and significant physical damage to property and infrastructure.

So storm water authorities provide a reasonable approach for funding. That is funding, what is needed to address stormwater problems. They provide a dedicated self-sustaining source of revenue to fund needed projects from rain gardens to sewer pipe repairs. Fees collected from landowners are small in comparison to the cost of the problem, and are small for the vast majority of landowners. For most residential property owners, monthly charges are minimal, about 2 to 7 dollars.

There are about 2000 such authorities across the country, so this is not a new, untried concept. Stormwater authorities are equitable because they

charge property owners, a user fee based on how much runoff they produce; all types of it all property pay appropriately. Stormwater authority can be flexible to account for local concerns. For example, if a municipality wants to provide consideration for low-income property owners or other local priorities, they are able to do so.

The cost for not addressing stormwater runoff are great and end up being born by the same folks who pay the fees that we're talking about. It is financially frugal to address stormwater issues before they -- before they necessitate expensive repairs. We heard Bill Lucy mention a couple of examples earlier today on that. Stormwater authorities also help create good jobs, sustain a healthy environment, essential for tourism, fishing, oystering, and waterfront businesses.

And finally, I think most notably right now, with some of the new federal stimulus money that we anticipate, federal funding can be a significant source for support for stormwater projects, but typically these require a non-federal match that is often unavailable. Stormwater authorities can provide that match, allowing much greater overall funding to be realized. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. And I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I appreciate that, Nathan. Does anybody have any questions? All right, seeing none. Thanks so much for your testimony.

NATHAN FROHLING: You bet. Good to see everyone. Thanks again.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. Okay. So, next, we have Cyrus Baird, followed by Joe Sculley, followed by Chris Phelps. Do we have Cyrus.

CYRUS BAIRD: Cyrus. Yes, Ma'am.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Sorry about that. I've only got wrong two names today. You're my second. Sorry, about that.

CYRUS BAIRD: You're not the first. You won't be the last. Do not worry. Do not worry. Good afternoon, and thank you to the Chairs, Cohen and Borer, and I also wanna thank the Vice-Chairs, Ranking Members, and the rest of the Committee for allowing me to give testimony today in opposition to Senate Bill 925.

My name is Cyrus Baird, and I'm the manager of government relations for Safari Club International, a not-for-profit organization with tens of thousands of members worldwide, including right here in Connecticut with the sole purpose and dedication to promoting wildlife conservation and protecting the rights to hunt worldwide. For your awareness of submitted written testimony on this legislation that I hope you all will be able to review. To keep things concise in the time that I do have, I want to clearly outline why Senate Bill 925 is bad for species conservation, bad for African countries, bad for law-abiding hunters, and bad for the state of Connecticut.

First Senate Bill nine 25 directly contradicts decades of scientific research compiled by the world's leading wildlife experts ranging from the United State's own government and African countries to the international union for conservation of nature, and the parties to the convention on international trade and endangered species of wild fauna and flora commonly known as CITES. That research clearly shows that legal, regulated hunting generates incentives that actually protect habitat, reduce poaching, and encourages local stakeholders to participate in the conservation of these species. To put this in perspective, there's currently more land in Africa conserved as hunting areas than as national parks.

Secondly, Senate Bill 925 will have detrimental financial impacts to rural communities in Africa who not only use hunting as a management tool in their conservation strategies themselves for the species in question, but also rely on the funds derived from hunting-related tourism as a major revenue sources. For example, local communities in Namibia, and Zimbabwe currently receive a hundred percent of fees associated with hunting. Whereas, fees related to photo tourism only go to a handful of individuals.

I would strongly encourage Members of the Committee and supporters of this legislation to directly consult with African Wildlife Management Authorities and government officials in Southern Africa before attempting to regulate their natural resources.

And finally, this legislation is simply unenforceable. Established legal precedent shows that Senate Bill 925 would be preempted by Section 6F the United States Endangered Species Act. In 2016, New Jersey passed similar Bill, and when challenged, the state conceded that it was not -- could not be enforced. And in that same year, US district court entered into a judgment against the state overturning the ban. Should this Bill be enacted, Connecticut would very likely expand both financial and personnel resources defending the law, which clearly violates federal statute.

In closing, hunting plays a huge role in species conservation, both in the United States and abroad. This legislation does nothing to protect the species in question and only seeks to harm law-abiding hunters in Connecticut, and the citizens, the African range countries that claims to help. Please oppose Senate Bill 925. And thank you for your time.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thanks, Cyrus, for your testimony. Can I just ask, are there other species -- you mentioned the protective lands specific for hunting use in Africa, are there other species aside

from the ones listed in this Bill that are hunted in Africa that hunters perhaps pay for trips to go over and hunt different animals? Is that from these called out?

CYRUS BAIRD: Yes.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you. Representative Dubitsky. Representative, I believe you're still on mute.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): There we go, I think I'm on. Thank you, Mr. Baird, for coming in. As you can imagine, most of the Members of this Committee are unlikely to get in touch with any Namibian conservation officers directly. Perhaps you have some type of research that you can provide to us or some -- you know, some correspondence from them indicating that what you say is the case, and that hunting -- controlled hunting under certain regulations is actually benefiting their areas?

CYRUS BAIRD: Yeah, absolutely. I've got as much research and data as you -- as you want to read. And then to do one better, I'd be happy to connect you or anybody with the Committee with folks in Africa who work for the various range country's wildlife departments, you know, similar to our department of the interior, so to speak, would be happy to make any contacts if I can.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Now, obviously, one of the big questions is, you know, if somebody is coming into Bradley airport with a suitcase full of rhino tusks, or whatever it is, how do we know that they were legally hunted and not poached?

CYRUS BAIRD: Well, you can't just bring rhino tusks in your check baggage. All of this is highly regulated within the Department of the Interior, specifically within the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. There are import-export paperwork that you have to fill out both in Africa and at the

port of entry. So it's not as simple as just bringing something back in your check baggage. It's a, it's an entire process that's highly regulated and has oversight authority from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Would it be fair to say, that if you showed up in Bradley and you didn't have all of that documentation, that the likelihood of those items being poached is a lot higher?

CYRUS BAIRD: You could make that assumption. Yeah. We're talking about legal, regulated hunting, which is a sharp contrast to poaching.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, you know, that may be something that is not well-known. Can you just walk me through it? Let's say, you know, I have -- you know, I'm a rich guy, and I have lots of time, and I would like to go hunt something in Africa. What do I do now to ensure that what I do is legal, and to ensure that the money that I'm gonna spend, which I assume is considerable, goes to the local community in Africa?

CYRUS BAIRD: Again, there are separate permits and paperwork associated with different countries. Usually, those are handled through the different outfitters or directly through the wildlife departments that they have over there.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Can you give me an example?

CYRUS BAIRD: I mean, I don't have anything on my -- at my fingertips, but would be happy to provide you with clearer examples after this, if --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Cause I think there's a perception that people just kind of head over there, blast something, and kind of pack it into the suitcase and bring it home. And, you know, I'm sort of giving you an opportunity to explain what the

real situation is, and explain, you know, how the process works and where the money goes, and why?

CYRUS BAIRD: Yeah. Well, permits are allocated through Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Authority -- Management Authority. Use that as an example. They're regulated through their own wildlife agencies in that country. So same way you would buy a hunting license in Connecticut through DEEP, they're regulated through those local wildlife management authorities.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So I get in touch with a outfitter, and I say, "I would like to go hunting in Africa." And they hook me up with the Zimbabwe Wildlife Authorities, and I buy a permit. Right? Okay. Then what?

CYRUS BAIRD: And then you hunt.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And then I get on a plane, and I go over there. And is there some oversight in some way to make sure that what I'm doing is legal?

CYRUS BAIRD: No more so oversight then hunting in Connecticut. I'm confused. I guess that your line of questioning, it's --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I'm just trying to -- I'm just trying to give you an opportunity to explain how the regulations work, and to dispel the perceptions that exists. That there is little difference between poaching and legal hunting. I'm trying to give you an opportunity to give us the procedures for doing this and explain why illegal hunting is very different than poaching.

CYRUS BAIRD: Sure. The clearest -- the clearest example, there is, you know, the tags and permits that you're required to get from these different agencies and, you know, that poachers don't get licenses and permits. They don't follow the law.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Now you said it's regulated through the Department of the Interior, returning?

CYRUS BAIRD: Yeah. Returning.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. How does that work?

CYRUS BAIRD: You know, apply for a permit, and each case is reviewed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. If accepted, if granted, you're allowed to bring your trophy back into the country.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And let's say, I get a permit from the Fish and Wildlife Service, and they say, "Okay, we've checked this out, and you've done everything correctly, and your money is going to the right people in the right place. And this is a legal conservation hunt." They give you a permit. You get on the plane, and you come home. And I assume you have to show those documents at the point of entry.

CYRUS BAIRD: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And if the point of entry is -- let's say it's in Connecticut and Connecticut has some type of ban; what would happen?

CYRUS BAIRD: That person would not be able to import that into that port of entry.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So they have to go to some other port of entry?

CYRUS BAIRD: I guess theoretically, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. All right. Well, I was sorta hoping you could give us a little more narrative on this, but if you can't, that's fine. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate your time.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Representative Dubitsky. And I don't see any other hands. So I think -- I don't think there's any more questions, so we wanna thank you for your testimony today. Thank you.

CYRUS BAIRD: Thank you all so much.

REP. BORER (115TH): I think next in the queue we have Joe Sculley, who will be followed by Chris Phelps.

JOE SCULLEY: Good afternoon, Co-Chairs Borer and Cohen and Ranking Members, minor and Harding and Committee Members. Thank you for this opportunity. Joe Scully, president of Motor Transport Association of Connecticut. I am a registered lobbyist, by the way. Here to speak in opposition to Senate Bill 931 about California truck emissions standards. I did submit my testimony to you; also, I will try my best to summarize my high-level points as to why we are opposed.

First of all, it would put Connecticut-based small-business trucking companies at a competitive disadvantage compared to their competitors in other states. Here in Connecticut, they would have to buy a more expensive trucks with honestly unproven technology, and those same rules won't apply in other states where the EPA standards are accepted. I mean, we would be in Connecticut saying, "The EPA standards, you can't buy an EPA compliant truck. It has to be California, extra stringent standards."

So, I think one of the effects this will have is it'll probably push trucks sales from Connecticut to other states. It may very well push trucking jobs from Connecticut to other states. And then, if that is the case, when EPA-compliant trucks are sold in other states. They can just drive through Connecticut as usual. You know, the state cannot turn these trucks away at the border, for example.

So I think we'd really be, you know, shooting ourselves in the foot here.

You know, I have a few data points, that I included in my testimony. You know, one was from DEEP data, which suggested that only 2% of mobile greenhouse gas emissions come from diesel, and, you know, 97% of trucks are run on diesel. So to me, that says, you know, trucks are not the problem. The trucking industry has made tremendous strides over the last 30 years in emissions and environmental progress. It would take 60, six zero, of today's trucks to equal the emission of one truck from 30 years ago. So we are making great progress through federal rules, and that's what we need. We have more federal rules on the books that are just now coming into effect. There are more in the works on low NOx standards by EPA.

So I would say, we need federal rules. I think there are other alternatives we can -- we can do the [Dera] option that was mentioned earlier. The folks can't fund for any trucking company that wants to voluntarily step up and say, "I'll buy a newer, cleaner, more expensive truck, if I can get a little bit of assistance through a grant." And by the way, literally, destroy the older dirtier truck, we've had members take big-time advantage of the Volkswagen program to date. So to me, that shows that we -- you know, we do care about environmental progress. I think we have a very good record of it. But we've got to make sure we don't put ourselves on an unlevel playing field. We're an interstate industry, and we need federal governance. And I'd suspect I'm probably running out of time. And I did submit a lot of testimony. So I can stop there. And if there's any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

REP. BORER (115TH): So you stopped yourself before the bell rang. Unless the bell rang and we didn't hear it. But well-timed. And thank you for your

thoughtful testimony. We do have a question from Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for coming in. You said something that I kind of like you to flesh out a little bit. So we can't stop trucks at the border. Explain that a little bit, if you would?

JOE SCULLEY: Yeah, what I'm saying is, there will be trucks that meet the EPA standard that Connecticut would -- with this Bill would be saying, "That standard is not good enough. We're having a more strict standard." But in other states, they will follow the EPA standard. And then those trucks that are sold there in their course of business will be driven to Connecticut, or through Connecticut, or both. And my point is that this Bill would prevent them from being sold here, but it can't prevent them from being operated here.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, are you saying that trucks that don't meet a higher California standard would still be able to operate in Connecticut; they just couldn't be sold in Connecticut?

JOE SCULLEY: Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying. I mean, think about big trucking states, Texas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Arkansas. They're not going to do this. They have trucking companies that distribute products all over the country, including to and through Connecticut. And that will continue to be the case. Those trucks will still come through here, even though the state is saying, they're not gonna have to be sold here, but they can't stop them from coming through or coming to here.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So if I've got a trucking dealership in, say, Danbury, or someplace like that near the border, and Connecticut imposes a stricter standard, I could just move across the border and continue to sell my trucks. And the

trucks could continue to be operated in Connecticut, right?

JOE SCULLEY: Yeah. You could. That's one way. Or many trucking companies -- some, I should say, I don't know if many, including some of our members, have locations in multiple states, they could decide, "I'm gonna go buy my trucks and base them at my New Hampshire location, as New Hampshire is not going to pass legislation like this." So that's jobs and business and commerce that is moving to New Hampshire because the company decides "I can buy an EPA compliant truck with proven technology at a lower price, than I would be able to in Connecticut." So that's a decision they could make.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So I wanna make a distinction. You're saying. One is -- I think your example was a trucking company, that's buying trucks and housing them -- and housing them in another state. I was talking about a dealership, somebody who's selling trucks. With regard to selling trucks, is that the only limitation? You can't sell a truck under the EPA standard in Connecticut?

JOE SCULLEY: You are correct. And kind of further to your point, I believe dealership groups will oftentimes have more than one location. So, if they felt they needed to, they could move their dealership from some town in Connecticut to a nearby state that was not doing this because that is where the business would be going.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And just, for the record, can you just tell us why Connecticut couldn't stop the trucks at the border?

JOE SCULLEY: I mean, it's interstate commerce. You know under the international registration plan, if you are -- if you are properly credentialed, registered through the International Registration Plan, and you have Connecticut, on what they call, your cab card, you can go to, or through

Connecticut. It would be a violation of that. And it would also just be highly impractical for some law enforcement agency, whether it's a DEEP or state police or something, to stop a truck and try to figure out, what standard did it meet? Did it meet the EPA standard or the California standard? It's just not gonna happen.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Now, when you say interstate commerce, you're referring to the United States Constitution Interstate Commerce Clause, I assume.

JOE SCULLEY: Absolutely.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, thank you for your time. I very much appreciate it. And thank you, Madam Chair.

JOE SCULLEY: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Representative Dubitsky. Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you, Mr. Sculley, for your testimony. I just wanna clarify, you're aware of the intent of this legislation is not to stop trucks at the border, but rather to begin to get medium and heavy-duty vehicles to conform to certain standards going forward for new medium and heavy-duty vehicles. Correct?

JOE SCULLEY: Right, right. When I mentioned "stopping trucks," I realized that's not the goal, nor is that going to happen. I'm just saying that, a likely result of this. Because we would be setting a standard that would require the purchase of more expensive trucks with yet-to-be-proven technology. The very trucks that Connecticut is saying are not good enough to be sold here, are gonna be sold in other states, and they're gonna come here, anyway. That's my point. It's pushing

it to other states. And because they could still come through here, I have a hard time seeing how this is going to improve our emissions standards, while I do see how it would be bad for business here.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): So, I'm not sure you're aware, Mr. Sculley, but we are one of 15 states who's entered into the zero-emissions vehicle memorandum of understanding. So, we do not sort of standing alone. Though I appreciate Connecticut's willingness to be a leader on this. We're certainly not, you know, alone in this. And so we wouldn't be the only state requiring zero-emissions vehicles by 2050 from medium and heavy-duty vehicles. But just for the record, those include many of our neighboring states, including New York, New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, many in the area, including the district of Columbia. So we really, as a region. Have established this memorandum of understanding.

And, would you say at this point, with an emphasis on global warming and greenhouse gas emissions in the recognition that, we are in this state, and in many others in non-attainment when it comes to those national ambient air quality standards, that this is sort of the direction that the industry needs to head in order to address the significant, you know, detriment that these emissions are having on our air quality, and impact to our ozone and thereby global warming.

JOE SCULLEY: I would just again, go back to the strong record that our industry has achieved through federal standards. Fact that MTAC members really stepped up during the first two rounds of the DEEP Volkswagen grants to say, "We are gonna buy these cleaner new trucks. I will literally destroy an older truck." And I think that's an important point because oftentimes they will -- they will sell it on the used truck market. They're saying, "I don't

even care about that. I will destroy this older dirtier truck if I can get a cleaner new truck."

And I would just very, as respectfully as possible, point out that this Bill is being pushed by DEEP, under the guise of, you know, emissions reductions, as they seemingly have no problem with killing the plant that is going to emit 2.2 million tons of CO2 annually, which is 13% of Connecticut's emissions. And as I said before, their data also says that, diesel-powered vehicles are only 2% of on -- of greenhouse gas emissions. So I think it's got to go -- it's got to go both ways, right? Trucks can't be the only bad guy while we have other sources of emissions to consider.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You know, I think -- you know, I think the transportation industry, we've seen a lot of data that the transportation industry has a significant impact on emissions in general. And I'm not just talking about medium and heavy-duty vehicles. I'm talking about all vehicle emissions. And the effort of our state to reduce those emissions, I think, is really important.

But to your point, I think absolutely we should be looking at other sources, and we are doing so in the state, I know. I introduced a Bill for a moratorium on those fossil fuel plants. I'm with you on that. I do not believe we should be burning fossil fuels at this point, and creating more carbon emissions. But similarly, I think we need to be moving in the right direction on medium and heavy-duty trucks, and doing all we can.

And I think at this point, you know, seeing that there's 15 states that have signed on to this memorandum of understanding, knowing that globally, we have an issue, and knowing that the federal administration is taking a close look at this, that it would behoove the medium and heavy-duty truck industry to be moving in that direction as well. And to look at sort of cost-efficient alternatives

to, you know, and long-term solutions to the serious problem that we have around the globe, not just here in the state, and not just here in this nation. But I appreciate your testimony today. Mr. Sculley.

JOE SCULLEY: All right. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. And thank you, Mr. Sculley. I don't see any other hands up, so I think that concludes the questions and the comments on your testimony.

JOE SCULLEY: All right. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Our next speaker is Chris Phelps, followed by Alicea Charamut.

CHRIS PHELPS: Hi, thank you, Representative. Hope you all can hear me. I'm Chris Phelps of Environment Connecticut, state director in the organization. And I've submitted testimony on a couple of Bills before you. I'll try to summarize my points, then speak to some of the things that have been raised throughout the course of this hearing.

One of those Bills is the one that you were just talking about with Mr. Sculley, Senate Bill 931. In contrast to him and his organization, Environment Connecticut strongly supports this Bill, as you might guess. And that support dates back on this issue to 2004 and before, when Connecticut adopted, as has been discussed, the California emission standards program for light-duty vehicles, passenger duty vehicles.

You know, as I was listening to Mr. Sculley, I was having flashbacks to that debate. Over 15 years ago now, a lot of the same opposition arguments that he just made in response to this Bill, or about this Bill, were being made back then. And I would just suggest that, frankly, the proof is in the pudding on how these standards actually work when enforced

by Connecticut and multiple other states around the country, including California. When it comes to light-duty vehicles, they've saved money for consumers at the pump, they've dramatically reduced emissions and strengthened our economy, and positioned our state as a leader in the pursuit of clean technologies, in this case, clean vehicle technologies. It's been, frankly, a win both economically and environmentally.

We strongly believe, and as our testimony points to, that the same dynamic plays out with this Bill as well. And I'll just point out one thing in response, direct response, to Mr. Sculley, in the points he was raising. Connecticut isn't doing this in a vacuum, as Senator Cohen pointed out. In fact, all of our neighboring states are moving forward at various stages with this exact same policy. We're not talking about a scenario where someone might just hop across the border to buy a EPA-compliant truck versus a California-compliant truck. They'd have to hop across multiple borders to do that. In the real world, the real experience, as with light-duty vehicles, is that just, isn't a concern that plays out negatively for Connecticut.

I'll leave it there. I'll be happy to answer any further questions on that later. But I wanna touch on the other Bills 6502, before I run out of time. This Bill largely dealing with single-use plastics is one that we strongly support, particularly Sections 1 through 4. Primarily because, you know, our position on the issue of single-use plastics and plastic products is that, nothing that we use for just a short period of time from your minutes, like a plastic bag or a polystyrene container, ought to pollute the environment, harm wildlife, and exist persistent environment for hundreds of years to come.

I won't speak to the details of our testimony. I'll just wrap up by saying, there were comments earlier about polystyrene recycling, for example. And one

question I think Representative Chafee asked, I believe the answer to is that, currently, less than 1% of polystyrene is actually recycled. There are various reasons for that, but most to the point is that, what recycling is happening doesn't actually apply to the materials mentioned -- products mentioned in this Bill. Because what recycling is happening, doesn't apply to food products, to food containers, for example, because those contaminate the recycling stream. They can't effectively be recycled.

I [inaudible] comments about compostable bags, I'd be happy to touch on if you're interested, as well as straws. I'm very sympathetic, and we are very sympathetic to the comments on the straws question from Kathy Flaherty earlier. And I think there's a lot of best practices on this, some of which are reflected in this Bill, for how to address the very real concerns and needs of the disabled community on that topic. And I think there's room for frankly consensus on that. And I hope this Bill can drive in that direction. I'll stop there cause I'm sure I'm over three minutes. But I'll have -- I'm happy to take any questions.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay, great. Thank you. I had a couple of questions, but I am going to defer to Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'm trying to operate off of my cell phone. So if Mr. Phelps could forward to the Committee the information that would back up the claim that California emissions saves money at the pump. I'd be very interested in taking a look at that. And if you could get that to our clerk, she can then disseminate it to the rest of the Committee. Thank you.

CHRIS PHELPS: Sure. I'd be happy to pull information together for that, Senator. Just speaking -- just anecdotally on my experience with

the California emissions standards for light vehicles. The car I drove in 2004, got about 20 miles to a gallon. The car I drive today gets about 90. But I'll provide more written response.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): I was in the car business when the state of Connecticut pursued that. So I'm pretty sure that what you're gonna find me, isn't gonna show me what you said. But that's okay. I'd love to see it. Thank you.

CHRIS PHELPS: Fair enough. Thank you, Senator.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Miner. Representative Demicco.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thanks, Chris, for coming to testify. I thought I heard at the end of your testimony that you wanted to make some suggestions as to how to improve Bill No. 6502. If I heard that correctly, I'd be happy to hear what you had to say.

CHRIS PHELPS: Sure. I think -- well, we haven't offered specific suggestions to change the language. Although I was listening to Ms. Flaherty's comments about straws, for example. I think that was the context I mentioned that in, and the need -- the needs of the disabled community in that regard. And I think I know a number of jurisdictions around the country, probably the largest of course being California, have already enacted policy in this area as well as many municipalities, et cetera.

And, I guess what I was suggesting is that -- and I know this Bill language does try to speak to the question of how to balance those needs with also the desire to reduce plastic pollution from that source. That we really look to the best practices in the experiences of those jurisdictions to ensure that we're talking about -- I'm blanking on the phrase I'm looking for. But in this Bill, it basically is pointing towards, as I understand it, ensuring that

straws are available to disabled customers in restaurants, for example, upon request, but without caveat, if you will. If this language isn't sufficient to accomplish that goal of meeting -- accommodating that need appropriately, there ought to be room to answer that question without just striking the section altogether and not dealing with the issue. It is my point. I'm not sure if that's a proper response to your question. I'm sorry, Representative.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): No, that is very responsive, Chris. I appreciate that. And I was thinking along the same lines when Kathy Flaherty was giving her testimony. And I appreciate the fact that you pointed out that other states have been able to do this successfully. You know, I think, we need to look at what other states have done in this regard. And I can't believe that we -- after all this time, we've been kicking this around for a couple of years now, that we can't come up with language that satisfies the needs of the environmental community, as well as the needs of the disability community. There ought to be a way to do this. But anyhow, that's for another time. So, thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHRIS PHELPS: I would agree with that. I would agree with that, and say, not only should we -- I think, not only can we, but we really should. Because, you know, I don't want a Bill -- language on this Bill to pass in Connecticut, but have the effect of -- in effect, you know, discriminating against this, you know, my disabled neighbors and family and friends. That's just not -- I don't think it's an either-or choice, but that's certainly not a choice I think anyone wants to go to agree to or have happen.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay. Agreed. All right. Thanks, Chris. Appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Representative. You know, just to follow up on the straws, not to belabor the point, what I was trying to say earlier, and maybe I didn't communicate it so well, is one of the issues we had last time about requiring straws to be available is, some restaurants don't have straws at all now. So, in passing this, but mandating the restaurants to have them available for those who may need them, we'll actually be requiring a restaurant that doesn't have them to have them. So, I think -- does that make sense? So I think we have to come up with -- when we work on this language, we have to come up with a way that, you know, it's a small percentage or, you know, supply so that we satisfy those customers but aren't now requiring restaurants that don't have straws at all to carry straws.

CHRIS PHELPS: Yeah, I think I follow that. And I would agree one of the sentiments involved here, or one of the contentions involved here is, you don't want to -- and I hear it in what you just said, you don't want to create - the word I'm hunting for, I'm sorry - a burden on that disabled customer, you know, that they have to overcome. That's not what anyone -- it just would be wrong. I don't think anyone would disagree with that. But there have to be ways to meet that test.

REP. BORER (115TH): Yeah. There has to be.

CHRIS PHELPS: That's my hope.

REP. BORER (115TH): As Representative Demicco said, right, we wanna get rid of the plastic, but we wanna accommodate. And we're smart enough to figure this out. Right?

CHRIS PHELPS: I hope so.

REP. BORER (115TH): And then, you know, we heard a lot about the polystyrene today. And I will just say that, as we've been sitting in this meeting,

we've been going on -- what are we? We're going on eight hours. All these students have been tweeting, you know, and tagging myself and Senator Cohen. And it's just an indication that the younger generation is advocating so much for these changes because they see it and, you know, it's their future. And it's, you know, it's great to see their advocacy, but it's also very telling that, you know, they're the ones who don't have the old habits that some of us have or older, that they -- they're the ones who are willing and wanting to change as much as we do.

And then the other thing is, I know we are the Environment Committee, we're not the Public Health Committee, but we never talk about the public health risks. It's ironic that the styrofoam we talk about, is a styrofoam that's used in restaurants for food. And we know that styrofoam, which is polystyrene into your food. And we know that that has ties to carcinogenic. So, I just wanted to say once, I know we're Environment Committee, but I just had to get that other one.

CHRIS PHELPS: And your point about, how much residence this issue has with young people, is right on the money. I mean, one of the first environmental shows I got involved with as a young person, three decades or more ago now, was this issue, actually. But so it was a little bit of a surprise to me, in 2019 when our organization, which, as you may know, run a summer citizen outreach door-to-door canvas about talking to people in the state about environmental issues. And in 2019 was the last time we ran it because of COVID. We were talking to people about polystyrene containers about this topic in this Bill. And we had -- that was the summer in recent history where - - I think that was the first summer in over 10 years, we just had more people, more young people, come work on that canvas than ever before. They were actually just motivated by that issue.

And I'll be honest, maybe a bit old and cynical, that surprised me in a very great way. This is an issue that's both resolved -- you know, is both motivates people, young and old, I think. But also is an issue that, you know, we can just do when we have the ability to switch away from these products. And I think that that experience in 2019 reinforced that point for me. So, anyway. Sorry, to go on about that.

REP. BORER (115TH): No, that's great. You've been advocating a long time. Thank you. Thank you for that. So, I do not see any other hands up. So I think that concludes any questions or comments. And so, we wanna thank you for your testimony tonight.

CHRIS PHELPS: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thanks, Chris. Okay. Our next speaker is Alicea Charamut, followed by Ann Gadwah.

ALICEA CHARAMUT: Thank you. Can you hear me?

REP. BORER (115TH): Yes, we can.

ALICEA CHARAMUT: Wonderful. So I wanna thank the Co-Chairs and the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Alicea Charamut. I'm the Executive Director of Rivers Alliance of Connecticut. And I am here in support of 6496, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SOIL-RELATED INITIATIVES, Sections 2 through 4; 6497, AN ACT CONCERNING STORMWATER AUTHORITIES; and 9274, AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE SEWAGE SPILL RIGHT-TO-KNOW STATUTE.

I was the Chair of the Rivers Sub-Working Group of the -- the Working and Natural Lands workgroup, BGC3, the Governor's Council on Climate Change. And one of the near-term recommendations in our report was to pass enabling legislation for stormwater authorities. So we're very pleased that this is being brought forward. And I will -- Will Lucey and Nathan Frohling already gave you fantastic

information on this. So I'm not gonna go into too much detail.

Also related to the governor's council on climate change is the soil-related Bill. And Sections 2 through 4, essentially give the soil water conservation districts, really statutory authority to do what they've already been doing. And Denise Savageau will be here later on in the hearing. And she will be able to answer questions on that.

And I'm leaving for the sewage -- leaving the sewage right-to-know statute for last. I'm a little bit of a wastewater geek, which makes me really fun at parties. And Rivers Alliance, obviously -- you know, our greatest concern is water quality and water quantity for all uses. And it's really important for folks, first of all, to understand that our wastewater control authorities are really taking the waste that we create in our businesses and homes and make it clean enough to put back into our rivers so that we can fish, swim, and paddle, whatever you wanna do in them. So their job is really important.

And I see the sewage right-to-know, these changes, as a way, not only to let people know when there are concerns in their rivers and streams, but it's an education, so people understand why we have to invest in our wastewater infrastructure. It is too often overlooked, because things go down the drain and people don't think about it anymore.

So, we were part of the stakeholder group that worked on -- worked with DEEP on this language. Some of the main items are there, we're still working on some of the specific language, and we hope to have that too soon, and work with you as well, because you are all stakeholders as well. And I've been listening through this whole time and hearing what some of you had to say about what's happened in your communities. And I very much

appreciate that. And I'll take any questions if you have them.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you very much. Hold on one second. I lost the participants. No, you actually don't. You don't have any questions. So, thank you very much for your testimony.

ALICEA CHARAMUT: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): And thank you for your patience while you waited.

Okay. Our next speaker is Ann Gadwah, hope I'm saying that correctly, and looking for number --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I don't have number 44. I don't have number 44 on the list, right now.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay, I don't see 45 either.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: I don't have 45 as well. So we'd go on to 46 for Paulina after this.

REP. BORER (115TH): Okay. So, this is Ann. Okay. And then Paulina is after Ann.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Yes.

ANN GADWAH: Thank you, Representative. You said it perfect. Senator Cohen, Representative Borer, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Ann Gadwah, advocacy and outreach organizer with Sierra Club Connecticut. And I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 925 and House Bill 6502.

Sierra Club support Senate Bill 925. We support it in the hopes that it will help protect these animals by helping to curb trophy hunting. Scientists have called the time we were living in "the sixth-grade extinction." Many of these extinctions are caused by human activity, and it is imperative that we do all

we can to preserve the biodiversity of the earth. The animals listed on this Bill are all threatened species, if not downright, critically endangered.

Trophy hunting these animals not only lessens the numbers of the species, but it also adversely affects other animals and the ecosystems around them. As the United States is the world's largest importer of animal trophies. We are in a unique position to act to protect these animals.

Often touted as a boost to local African economies and a funding source for conservation efforts, actual numbers show that it is neither. There are certainly better ways to fund conservation efforts and less cruel ways of boosting local economies, such as ecotourism or pitcher taking safaris. And trophy hunting often blurs the line between legal hunting and illegal poaching, creating a danger to park rangers, law enforcement, and local communities. Like I said, we have a unique opportunity here in Connecticut to help preserve and protect world wildlife, and we should absolutely take it.

Sierra Club also supports House Bill 6502, with some recommendations to strengthen the Bill and provide for local efforts to further eliminate plastic waste, as you can see in our written testimony. As I'm sure you are aware, plastic pollution is a danger to wildlife, ecosystems, and human health. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, which is fueling the climate crisis that is already upon us.

Most plastic is not recycled even when there is the option. So we must take steps to reduce it, to use as much as possible to stem the tide of trash that threatens to engulf us. Banning polystyrene, excuse me, should really be an easy one. It's not recyclable here in the state. It breaks up into microplastics. And overburdens our waste stream. There's a slew of other options for takeout

containers, and many municipalities have already banned it. It is simply not a necessity.

We also support prohibiting food service establishments from providing single-use plastic straws unless requested by a patron. We would also like to include plastic stirrers and plastic tableware in the language of this Bill. There are many other alternatives to these items. Prohibiting the release of helium balloons into the atmosphere should also be an easy one. This just contributes to the plastic problem plaguing our oceans. Nobody wants to see a sea turtle or a pelican choking on a helium balloon, or see one in the belly of a beached whale. We absolute should enact a total ban on helium balloons release.

Finally, we support a study of compostable bags, I guess. If they are a viable replacement for traditional plastic bags, we need to know if they are truly better for the environment, particularly if they're going to be advertised that way. Plastic waste, in general, is completely out of control. We must reduce it to use wherever possible. We urge the legislature to pass this Bill with the recommendations from our written testimony. Thank you. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you so much. I'm looking, and I don't. Questions get fewer and fewer by the end of the day. And it's not because our meetings are long. It's because the questions have been asked, and they have been answered, and we've discussed it. So, no questions or comments is a good thing. That means we're getting to the bottom of the issues, and have covered a lot of it. So I wanna thank you for your testimony, and we really appreciate you being here.

ANN GADWAH: Thank you for the opportunity.

REP. BORER (115TH): You're welcome. Okay, so that was Ann, so our next speaker is Paulina Munn. And Paulina will be followed by Omar Terrie.

PAULINA MUNN: Thank you so much. Hello everybody. My name is Paulina Munn. I am a graduate of Cornell University, and have personally witnessed firsthand the incredible value of wildlife tourism. And I was speaking today to try to dismantle the myth that trophy hunting is the only viable tool for conservation available for countries in Africa. Which is why, I'm very excited to support raising SB 925, as it is an essential first step towards a sustainable future.

The six species noted in the big six Bill, particularly the black rhino and white rhino are all crumbling under the weight of our inhumanity and antiquated and inadequate solutions to fight the rapid decline of biodiversity. Well, I do not personally support trophy hunting as it is, I can't appreciate the revenue and tourism and direct conservation funding that trophy hunting created for the countries in Africa. However, I note with emphasis, that the necessity of trophy hunting of non-nuisance animals to fund most African conservation is, at this point, orchestrated and preserved by government regulations and not effective in the long term.

The argument that reducing demand for trophy hunting would be a conservation and fiscal disaster, not only fails to recognize the undue burden that Connecticut would bear -- would have the ethical obligation to bear and ensuring no illegally obtained trophies were laundered into the state, but also neglects to highlight the fact that trophy hunting as a tool for conservation exists only because our conservation systems have been structured that way. Unlike the early days of big-game conservation, the world today is vastly different. With more people preferring to travel to

see wild animals and leaving them alive than going to kill them.

Those who continue to promote hunting as a requirement for wildlife conservation, unfortunately, are also the entities that have inherited a significant conflict of interest created by our outdated conservation models. This conflict of interest is often muddled by confusing figures on the economic value of trophy hunting versus wildlife viewing tourism, with barriers to tourism being not only the effect that hunting has on wildlife behavior, which makes them harder to see, but also the reality that pro-hunting groups have historically opposed the exploration of alternatives by citing the conservation dollars lost if hunting were to be reduced.

However, there are multiple studies of models that have managed to break through these barriers, and have successfully pivoted in sustainable direction. These models provide irrefutable evidence that the reason conservation relies on trophy hunting is because that is the only real system put in place, not because it's our only option.

Agencies offering testimony against raising this Bill in defense of the trophy hunting industries wellbeing, and that of the conservation movement have either intentionally or negligently failed to acknowledge that consumptive tourism, meaning hunting and fishing, is in sharp decline. And that is a reality that all of us must recognize and embrace as a clear indication that it is time we explore other ways to conserve. For these reasons, I support raising SB925, as it is an essential first step in Connecticut's embracing of a sustainable future that beckons wildlife agencies at home and abroad to find better and more sustainable solutions to save the biodiversity and habitat on our planet. Thank you. And I'll take any questions you have.

REP. BORER (115TH): That was perfectly timed.

PAULINA MUNN: Was it? Oh, great.

REP. BORER (115TH): It was. It was. We didn't hear the bell ring, and you got in all of your important statements and comments. We do have a Representative who would like to ask you some questions, and that's representative Michel.

PAULINA MUNN: Absolutely.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. No, I just wanted to make a quick comment. That was a great testimony, Paulina. And for sake of time, I'll keep it short. But thank you for coming and testifying.

PAULINA MUNN: Of course. My pleasure.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Paulina. Thank you for being here, and we'll certainly take your comments into consideration.

PAULINA MUNN: Thank you so much.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Our next speaker is Patricio.

PATRICIO PORTILLO: Hey, can you hear me?

REP. BORER (115TH): Yes.

PATRICIO PORTILLO: Hey, good afternoon, Co-Chairs Cohen and Borer, Vice-Chairs and Members of the Committee. Thank you for holding this important hearing, and for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Patricio Portillo, and I'm a Transportation Analyst at the Natural Resources Defense Council. This morning I'm testifying -- or this afternoon now, I'm testifying in strong support of Senate Bill 931. The Bill is vital to give Connecticut the tools it needs to meet its air quality and climate goals by addressing

toxic emissions from the dirties vehicles on our roads.

So I was planning to talk more about the benefits of these standards, but seeing some of the testimony that's been submitted, and hearing what was said today, I think I feel a little bit more obligated to address some of the misinformation that is being spread.

The first theme that I've heard is that this will harm competition and business and disadvantage the state relative to its neighbors. So first of all, all of Connecticut's neighbors have signed the multi-state zero-emission truck and bus MOU, and many like New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts have announced plans to consider adopting California's emission standards as well.

Almost all of these medium and heavy-duty vehicles are for commercial purposes. That means the purchasers are businesses making rational business decisions based on underlying economics. And businesses want these vehicles. There are literally billions of dollars in pre-orders today for major freight movers for these zero-emission trucks. There's demand for these vehicles because zero-emission trucks are attractive on a total cost of ownership basis due to the anticipated fuel and maintenance cost savings that we expect to see. But supply is limited today, which is why we need requirements like California's Advanced Clean Truck rule to make sure manufacturers produce zero-emission trucks at the volume that we need.

Also to be clear. These rules are requirements on the manufacturer. They don't require businesses or fleets to buy anything. It just makes -- just make sure that there are clean, less expensive electric vehicle options made available to these businesses. Fuel and maintenance cost savings aside, there are also massive public health savings from more stringent emissions standards. When California went

through the low NOx rulemaking, they found that the rule reduced NOx emissions by 90%, providing nearly \$37 Billion dollars in public health benefits.

Another theme that I've heard is this idea that the Bill somehow runs counter or conflicts with federal rulemaking. I'm here to tell you this makes no sense. In 2020 EPA indefinitely delayed a low NOx rulemaking. It's extremely unclear if and when that rule will be finalized. But let's assume that they start that, that backup. The earliest that rule could come into effect is 2027. At a minimum, this would create a gap of several years between the California schedule and federal implementation, delaying those critical reductions and toxic emissions that we need to see.

It also may not be stringent enough to meet Connecticut's needs. It may not include incentives for zero-emission trucks. There's just a lot of unknowns around that. Fortunately, the federal and the state actions aren't mutually exclusive. And in this case, they're actually complementary. Connecticut can move forward with California's emission rule while continuing to advocate for strong national standards as well.

On top of that, Connecticut is, you know, at the very least should make sure it has all the tools in its tool belt to address its own unique air pollution issues, rather than, you know, deferring that authority to the political whims and timelines of Washington, DC.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Your three minutes is up. So just we'd ask if you could wrap up.

JOE SCULLEY: Certainly. Yeah. Thank you again for this opportunity. I've submitted a sign-on letter with 86 organizations, all urging states to adopt California mission standards. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Thank you for bringing that to our attention. I don't see any questions. Or I don't see any hands raised in the Zoom, so we wanna thank you for your testimony, for your patience. We know it's been a long day. But appreciate all that you have to offer. You contribute to the conversation.

JOE SCULLEY: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Our next speaker is Omar, followed by Denise.

OMAR TERRIE: Good afternoon. Can you hear me, Representative Borer?

REP. BORER (115TH): Yes. Yes, I can.

OMAR TERRIE: Excellent. Well, good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, and Members of the Committee. And thank you so much for bearing with us all. You guys are real troopers. My name is Omar Terrie. I'm The director of the Plastic Food Service Packaging Group with the American Chemistry Council. And I'm here to oppose a section of HB 6502 specifically, the polystyrene foam ban.

You have testimony in there from some colleagues concerning the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut, as well as the Connecticut Association of Board of Education on the extreme detrimental impacts that this will have. So, I'll let you guys read that at your leisure and concentrate on some points that I would like to readdress with the Committee, concerning advanced recycling, right, and the recycling of these -- this material.

First and foremost, while polystyrene foam has had some issues when it comes to mechanical recycling and getting those numbers up, there are new technologies that are being brought to bear across the United States and the world under the advanced recycling umbrella.

As my colleague earlier, Steve Lake mentioned, that is taking place with one company AmSty entire Oregon. But that's not the only place. We're seeing advanced recycling technology take shape in Illinois, where a 100 ton per day facility is being constructed to recycle polystyrene foam, and in fact, all polystyrene by a company called INEOS Styrolution. This is also taking place in the Atlanta, Georgia area where they're taking all types of plastics polystyrene, polyethylene, you know, polypropylene, and they are turning those plastics into chemical feedstocks, waxes, and fuels, and increasing the production of post-consumer recycled content for consumers.

Additionally, this is taking place in Virginia as well through a company called Braven Environmental, which is building out an advanced recycling -- advanced recycling from there. Altogether there, additionally, another nine states that have advanced advance recycling Bills. Those States happened to Florida, Wisconsin, Georgia, Iowa, Tennessee, Texas, Ohio, Illinois, and most recently, Pennsylvania.

As I'm sure most of you on this Committee know ACC is interested in bringing this type of technology to Connecticut. And in fact, the Advanced Recycling Bill was presented before the Environment Committee. However, it has not been -- it has not received a hearing yet. And so we would urge you all first and foremost to amend HB 6502 to look at advanced recycling technologies before pushing abandoned, hurting businesses and schools, and to look into advanced recycling technologies until allow us to actually have a hearing on the Bill.

And then finally, as I'm sure most of you are aware, in Connecticut, polystyrene is actually not allowed to be recycled by statute. So, you know, we can't really recycle it if it's not even allowed to be recycled. I'm trying to be respectful of the three minutes, so -- [crosstalk] oh, okay. Thank you.

Perfect. I'm just getting ready to close out. So, that's my testimony. I'm willing to answer any questions. But I understand you guys have had a very long day as well.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. And that's okay. That's what we're here for. So, you know, doesn't matter what time it is. We wanna hear your testimony. So, does anybody have any questions for Omar? No. With that, then we're going to thank you for your testimony today, and appreciate all your input.

OMAR TERRIE: Thank you so much, Representative. And I hope the rest of the community has a good day. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. That's nice. Thank you.

Okay. Our next speaker is --

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Tom Swan. He wasn't on before, but we can put him on now.

REP. BORER (115TH): Oh, Tom Swan, yes. He dropped off, and then I put him back in. Okay. So, our next speaker is Tom Swan, who will be followed by Denise.

TOM SWAN: Good evening, Senator Cohen, Representative Borer. How are you? It's been a long day. I wanna thank you, and the other Members of the Environmental Committee for raising a number of the Bills today, but specifically Senate Bill 931 AN ACT CONCERNING EMISSIONS STANDARDS FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY DUTY VEHICLES. CCAG strongly urges its passage, and offers our support for your efforts to pass it.

Adopting California emission standards is a smart policy. It will save lives. It will hope us meet our climate goals. And it makes sense from an

economic perspective. Trucks makeup about 10% of the vehicles on the road but are responsible for nearly 30% of carbon emissions in 60% of particle matter, emitted from the transportation sector. These emissions not only contribute to climate change, but they also have significant health impacts, including asthma, heart attacks, lung cancer, and strokes. That all contribute to more deaths. A recent union of concerned scientists study found that African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, are disproportionately harmed by air pollution and, plus, face a much greater exposure pointing to how this is truly an environmental justice issue.

You all know that last year, Governor Lamont signed a multi-state compact with 14 other states. Also, last year, California adopted these war aggressive standards. We're really happy to see that DEEP has endorsed these policy standards, and agree that it's an important part of us meeting our emission goals. The recent announcements by General Motors and Ford point to the inevitability of the market. Moving in this direction, in Connecticut, it will benefit by being in lead on this front.

We urge you to reject the tired rationale offered by opponents of this legislation. They use these arguments when earlier proposals were passed. The sky didn't fall then; it's not gonna fall now. Reduced fuel costs and less engine maintenance will mean there will be minimal additional costs, if any, for industry. Thank you once again. And we look forward to working with you for passing it. And you all are really putting in a long day, and we appreciate it.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Tom. Thank you for your years of advocacy. I'm sorry. I apologize. That's my dog. So does anybody have any questions for Tom? Nope. Well, I guess you said it all, Tom. Thanks so much for being here.

TOM SWAN: Thank you. And thanks for all you do.
Bye-bye.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thanks. Okay, our next speaker is -- Oh, I said it out of order before. I'm sorry. So, our next speaker is Samantha Dynowski, followed by Denise.

SAMANTHA DYNOWSKI: Hi there. Thank you, Representative Borer, Senator Cohen, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and Members of the Committee, and the Committee Staff who are demonstrating that they're rock stars and making this hearing possible. Thank you. My name is Sam Dynowski. I'm State Director of Sierra Club Connecticut.

On behalf of the Sierra Club and our more than 40,000 members and supporters in Connecticut, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 931, AN ACT CONCERNING EMISSIONS STANDARDS FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY DUTY VEHICLES. I've submitted written testimony on this Bill, and have heard several previous speakers cover our key points, so I'll just briefly summarize.

We're committed to solving the climate crisis with just and equitable solutions that will result in a healthy world for everyone. And here in Connecticut, we are feeling the impacts of climate change driven by greenhouse gas emissions. We're also experiencing poor air quality, and the negative health impacts of pollution, with disproportionate impacts on Black and Hispanic residents.

Senate Bill 931 is a meaningful opportunity to address all of these issues, and an actionable step to attain the goals of the Global Warming Solution Act, Connecticut's climate law, introduced by this Committee that mandates a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions below 2001 levels by 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050.

Our testimony supplies more specific information on the climate, environmental justice, and health issues we are facing. As well as the benefits we anticipate from this legislation. And we've also shared information on the zero-emission medium and heavy-duty vehicles on the market.

A piece of news on this front. Today FedEx announced that its delivery fleet will be made up of a hundred percent electric vehicles by 2040 with interim benchmarks, including 50% by 2025.

In conclusion, Sierra club, strongly supports Senate Bill 931, appreciates the work of this Committee on the Bill, and urges your support. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Samantha. Thank you for all your advocacy, all of your meetings, all of your testimony.

SAMANTHA DYNOWSKI: Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): All of the work that you do. Does anybody have any questions for Samantha? I don't see any hands raised in the Zoom. So I wanna thank you for being here, and thank you for all of your support on these Bills.

SAMANTHA DYNOWSKI: Thank you. Take care. Have a good night.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Samantha.

Our next speaker is Denise, who will be followed by Stacey Ober.

DENISE SAVAGEAU: Thank you, Senator Borer -- Representative Borer, I should say. Thank you to the Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and other Members of the Environment Committee for today's hearing. My name is Denise Savageau. I am the Chair of the Connecticut Council on Soil and Water Conservation. I'm here to testify in support of House Bill 6496,

soil health Sections 3, 4, and 5. I have also provided written testimony that includes information on soil health. I'm happy to ask any questions at the end.

First, I wanna thank Senator Kasser for supporting our efforts to update Connecticut statutes to include health. We really appreciate them. I also want to thank the Commissioner of Agriculture for supporting this Bill. I agree that any work related to soil health on farms and farmland soils must include the Department of Agriculture. We strengthened our working relationship with the Department of Ag during the Governance Council on Climate Change process on soil and soil health. And we look forward to continuing our work with them on this important issue.

Our understanding of soils and soil health, like our understanding of climate change, has advanced greatly over the last two decades. This Bill seeks to update our current statutes to include soil health, keeping pace with the science. This is especially important as we seek solutions to climate change. Updating our statutes now acknowledges the importance of soil health, recognizes the ongoing work related to soil health, and most importantly, ensures that it continues.

The council is grateful for the support of DEEP, and its recognition of soil health as important for food supply and food security for water quality and quantity, for carbon sequestration, and biodiversity as is evidenced in the GC3 reports. And although I understand their staffing concerns, I would respectfully disagree with them on their assertion that this Bill creates new programs or increased workload. Instead, it recognizes and support soil health as important to addressing matters related to soil and water conservation.

Soil health practices are nature-based, low impact, low-cost solutions are important tool in our toolbox

when we're dealing with all of the issues mentioned before. We look forward to working with the Committee and DEEP on language to ensure that soil health is included in this Bill.

In closing, we have included, suggested changes to Sections 3 and 4. This language better defines the work of the conservation districts, the council on solid water conservation, and our partner agencies, including DEEP, and the Department of Ag. Where current language defines soil and water conservation primarily as soil erosion, we propose expanding it to include soil health, soil erosion, loss of important soil landscapes including prime and important farmland soils, watershed health, and related ecosystem services and soils, including their role in climate change, mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency. Thank you for your time. And I'm happy to answer any questions.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Denise. We do have -- we do have Representative Mushinsky who would like to ask some questions or comments.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Hi. Denise, I just wanted to ask you, do you feel there's any benefit to passing this Bill in order to possibly attract some federal dollars from climate change investment to our state? Does this tie in with anything the feds are doing?

DENISE SAVAGEAU: Absolutely ties in with work of the federal government. As, you know, they have a major climate change initiative, including at the Department of Agriculture. One of the initiatives there, is actually creating a carbon bank for farmers, making sure that we have a soil health program here on the state, particularly for our agricultural producers. They'll be able to tie into that. But I think as importantly as we work very closely with USDA, the natural resources conservation service, now on soil health. And having programs like that allows us to tie directly

into some of their funding, whether it be on agricultural lands or supporting, you know, other work that we do in forests and across the landscapes.

You know, a lot of times, we only think the USDA Programs are about farms, but they actually have a much more extensive program than that. And some folks may be familiar that we're doing a source water protection work in the farm river watershed in the Branford, Guilford area, and that's all USDA funded. And it's gonna be a big soil health component as part of this. So, it definitely attracts more federal dollars.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Okay. Well, that's good news. And just, if you would follow along the Bill with us to make sure -- and if you're also paying attention to Congress, cause we may not be as close to it as you are. And if we need to adjust the Bill, as we go to attract those federal dollars, I hope you will give us the word so we can make some changes, and be the first one in line to get help for our Connecticut constituents.

DENISE SAVAGEAU: Thank you. I will definitely do that. And I just wanna say to that point is that, the conservation districts and the Council on Soil and Water Conservation came out of the dustbowl era, or established in the 1940s. And one of the reasons that they were established was to provide local input into this federal dollars that's coming in through USDA. The conservation districts are referenced in the farm Bill, which is the largest conservation title, and the largest funding for conservation in the United States.

So I just wanna make sure people understand how important that the work of the conservation districts and the council that helps coordinate that within the state and with our other state agencies like DEEP and the Department of Agriculture are to making those federal lengths at the state level, and

then bringing it right down to the local level. So thank you for that question.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): And thank you, Madam Chair.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Denise. I don't see any other questions or comments, so thank you for your testimony today.

DENISE SAVAGEAU: Thank you for the opportunity.

REP. BORER (115TH): Our next speaker is Stacey Ober, followed by Amy Mallardi.

STACEY OBER: Good evening Committee Chairs, Leaders, and Committee -- and Committee Members. My name is Stacey Ober. I am the Advocate in New England on behalf of the American Kennel Club, and I am registered in Connecticut. The American Kennel Club is a nonprofit organization that is affiliated with more than 5,000 dog clubs across the country, including 57 in Connecticut. And we're widely recognized as the trusted expert in canine health training, breeding, and responsible dog ownership. I wanted to acknowledge our support for House Bill 6504 on animal welfare, which would update Connecticut statutes in a number of ways. And I'd like to just make three points on that.

In Section 6 of the Bill, it affords municipalities some flexibility by allowing neighboring towns to contract for temporary coverage of animal control officer duties if their own animal control officer is on leave for pregnancy, or an illness, or something of that nature. And to provide the town with full legal protections in doing that, which I think is important.

Secondly, I'd like to thank the Department of Agriculture for updating under section 11, the service animal text, which aligns Connecticut statute with the federal American with Disabilities act. There was a working group that I served on

under Representative Abercrombie back in 2019, where we reviewed all of Connecticut statutes. And I'm grateful to see the Department of Agriculture put forward that text we worked on to align Connecticut statutes in those areas of the Connecticut law, where they have jurisdiction.

The American Hennel Club appreciates the breeders, the trainers, the handlers of these dogs, and we support breeding programs to ensure that sufficient, high-quality, domestically bred dogs are available to the disability community.

Last, I wanna just acknowledge that Senator Miner made mention of the changes in Section 9 of the Bill that would require any person operating an animal shelter, provide a veterinary exam within 48 hours of importing a cat or dog into the state. I know there'll be others after me who will speak to that, but did want to acknowledge the importance of actually providing that veterinary exam. The proper intake of animals is important in terms of isolating health risks, not only to the animal population, but also to the people who might work in the shelter, and may be exposed to any number of zoonotic diseases. And, of course, any family that might, re-home a pet in need. Thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Stacey. Anybody have any questions for Stacey? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for coming in. I very much appreciate it. I know that the American Kennel Club does some good work with regard to dogs and other animals. And now, I just wanted to make sure that you had time. Did you get through all of the sections that you wanted to comment on?

STACEY OBER: Thank you, Representative. I did. I did submit written testimony, so I wanted to just

highlight those areas in sections of the Bill that had not been previously elaborated on.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I appreciate it. Now, there've been a lot of discussion today about the redefinition of "animal" in Section 1 on the first page.

STACEY OBER: Yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Does AKC have any position or any thoughts on that?

STACEY OBER: When I reviewed the Bill. I was looking at it from the standpoint of K9s, and how it applied to dogs. But I have sat through today's hearing and I am aware that other states have in fact, move forward to amend their animal cruelty statute to include wildlife because of the unfortunate instances that this Committee heard earlier today. As I look at the Bill, it appears as though the attempt was to address under Chapter 435 domestic animals and livestock that are domesticated as well. That may not be the appropriate place if there are animal control officers who are engaged when there are wildlife issues. It may be that that under your environmental agency DEEP, you were all referring to, may actually be deserving of some language in terms of recognizing ACO's role. But, as I review that section of the statute, I didn't find a problem with the changes that were made.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, thank you. I appreciate your answers. And thank you for coming out and testifying. And thank you, Madam Chair, for the time.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Seeing no other questions. Thank you, Ms. Ober for your testimony today.

STACEY OBER: Thank you. Have a good evening.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You too. Next, we have Amy Mallardi, followed by Charles Munn, followed by Julie DesChamps.

AMY MALLARDI: Thank you, Co-Chair Senator Cohen. I know it's been a long day. So thanks again to the Vice-Chairs, Senator Slap, Representative Gresko, Ranking Member Senator Miner, and Ranking Member Representative Harding, and all the Members of the Environment Committee. I will be brief. I'm offering testimony in support of SB 925, an act prohibiting the import, sale, and possession of the big six African species. My name is Amy Mallardi, and I live in Oxford, Connecticut; that's House District 131, Senate District 32.

I would like to thank Representative Labriola from the 131st District for co-sponsoring SB 925. He has really become a receptive and reliable ally with regards to legislation to further animal protection laws. So thank you for that. And of course, to Nicole Rivard in Friends of Animals for their perseverance on this Bill, to protect the big six African species.

As a supporter of this Bill, I realized that permits have been issued to Connecticut residents to hunt animals on the endangered species list. As clearly evidenced by those permits, the Endangered Species Act does not prevent animals from being hunted. And this is why it feels so strongly about passing SB 925.

As of last night there were 42 written email testimony submissions. And from what I could see, only two of those submissions were in opposition to this Bill. One submitted by DEEP and the other by ACLU. So, as I saw, the support far outweighs the opposition for this Bill. However, what I did find very interesting is that I could not find one single trophy hunter that was willing to submit testimony to oppose the Bill. So, where are those trophy

hunters, and why are they unwilling to provide their testimonies in opposition of SB 925?

And lastly, I submit that biodiversity is, and should be a major concern when this Bill is discussed. The well-being and future of humans is directly linked with all other species and the ecosystem that we share. So, if we continue to lose species, either knowingly or silently, we lose that biodiversity.

So I thank you for your time. I know it's been a really long day. And if I may just very quickly submit testimony in support, I have emailed it in HB 6502, the polystyrene products. As a breast cancer survivor, I am very, very aware of anything that can be a suspected carcinogen or neurotoxin, and I'm in full support of this film. So thank you very much.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Ms. Mallardi, for your testimony. And I seem, Representative Dubitsky has a question for you.

AMY MALLARDI: Sure.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you for coming in. You asked the question, why aren't any of the hunters here? I think, you know the answer to that, don't you?

AMY MALLARDI: I do. It was a rhetorical question.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Right. And it's because they would be harassed, and threatened and their lives would be endangered if they came and testified in public. Right?

AMY MALLARDI: I don't know that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But you've seen that happen around the country, in the news. Right?

AMY MALLARDI: I have seen it. And I also would submit that, perhaps they're ashamed that they've hunted an endangered species.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, knowing a lot of hunters, I can assure you, they're not ashamed. They're just worried about animal rights activists showing up at their door, and firebombing their houses. Thank you for your time. Thank you, Madam Chair.

AMY MALLARDI: Thank you, Representative Dubitsky.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative Representative Michel.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Amy, for your amazing advocacy and work, and for being an amazing peaceful activist, as demonstrated in Times and in the other animal right groups in the state. I just wanted to thank you. I just a quick question. Were you able -- did you see any of the other testimonies? Did you particularly see the one from the DEEP [inaudible]?

AMY MALLARDI: No, I have been popping in and out a all day. Just, I have a small child at home, so I've just been popping in here and there to see where I am in the speaker order. But, I do plan to go back and watch the public hearing.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. That was it.

AMY MALLARDI: Thank you, Representative Michelle.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. Okay. I don't see any other questions. So I thank you so much, Ms. Mallardi, for your testimony.

Next. We have Charles Munn, followed by Julie DesChamps, followed by Jo-Anne Basile. Hi, Charles.

DR. CHARLES MUNN: Good evening. Can you hear me?

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I can. Nice to see you.
Welcome.

DR. CHARLES MUNN: Thank you. So, I'm testifying in support SB 925. The act prohibiting the import of the six different species from Africa. And so, thank you, Co-Chair Cohen, Co-Chair Borer, Vice-Chair Slap, Vice-Chair Gresco, Ranking Member Miner, Ranking Member Harding, and honorable Members of the Committee.

Of the six species listed, two are extremely endangered already, namely the black rhino and the white rhino. Therefore no trophy hunting of them should be allowed at all. Therefore, importation of trophies of rhinos clearly should be prohibited.

Regarding the other forest species on the list, which are the lion leopard, African elephant, and giraffe. The primary reason why trophies of those four species should be banned from import into the state is that, many or most of the countries of Africa that still allow trophy hunting are not sufficiently serious and rigorous about controlling the hunting. And I say this, having worked for the New York psychological society as a field biologist, having worked in Africa and a number of countries there. There are too many opportunities for countries to launder a trophy animals hunted in neighboring countries that have very little control over the sustainability of the hunt.

It is too difficult for authorities in Connecticut to evaluate the sustainability and social and environmental impact of trophy hunting, and so many African countries. And to keep up with changes in the laws and law enforcement in many African countries. Additionally, given the glaring conflict of interest of DEEP with regards to any issues related to hunting, it is hard to take their testimony at face value.

It is true that large wild areas in some African countries are set aside specifically for trophy hunting, carried out almost entirely Europeans and North Americans. Recent studies of the economics of this hunting, however, shows that the local black communities adjacent to these hunting reserves, receive a very tiny percentage of the money being generated by the hunting. Thus, until the economic benefits to local communities are increased to be both substantial and fair, and the sustainability is demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt, the state of Connecticut should ban import of trophies of all six of these species. Thank you very much.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Mr. Munn. I see Representative Michel has his hand raised.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Mr. Munn, for testifying again this year under different conditions. I was just wondering, is there -- do you see hunting for conservation comments [inaudible] Do you see any conflicts of interest?

DR. CHARLES MUNN: Well, I mean, it's -- I mean, the problem with most state wildlife agencies in the United States, this is not unique to Connecticut, is that almost all of the state wildlife agencies of state governments have a conflict of interest when it comes to hunting because they receive so much money from the gun and ammunition tax. And the more sport hunters in a state, the larger piece of this federal gun tax pie they receive. Therefore, it's very difficult to take them seriously because they're gonna be pro-hunting automatically. That's a major conflict of interest. So I mean, DEEP might be right about some of their statements supporting trophy hunting, but it's hard to take them seriously because they show so much bias -- pro-hunting bias otherwise.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Thank you, Dr. MUNN, and thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. All right. I don't see any further question. So, thank you, Mr. Munn, for your testimony today.

DR. CHARLES MUNN: Thanks so much.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Next, we have Julie DesChamps, followed by Jo-Anne Basile, followed by Betsy Gara. Welcome, Julie.

JULIE DESCHAMPS: Thank you. Thank you to the Environmental Committee for the opportunity to express my support of HB 6502. I'm Julie DesChamps, the founder of Waste-Free Greenwich. And I'd like to comment on one section of the Bill, in particular, styrofoam, trays in Connecticut schools.

As a Green Schools Committee Member of Greenwich public schools, I've led efforts to eliminate polystyrene trays from our cafeterias. After pleading our case to administration for over a decade, Local advocates can sustain lobbying campaign to the Board of Education in 2018.

At meeting after meeting and op-eds and in community petitions, we argued that our children should not be exposed to styrene, a carcinogen, and hormone disruptor. We were especially concerned about those students participating in the national school lunch program, who did not have a choice, but to ingest styrene with breakfast and lunch every day for up to 13 years. The cumulative health effects of styrene exposure on developing bodies can be nothing but detrimental.

Our team discovered that the Greenwich Public Schools trashed almost a half a million non-recyclable styrofoam trays each year to be incinerated at the detriment of our air and soil quality, and the health of our neighbors in

Peekskill and Bridgeport. These trays used for mere minutes, create a trail of harmful pollutants and waste from manufacturer to disposal. Use of polystyrene trays in Connecticut schools is an unsustainable, harmful practice. It's simply unacceptable, particularly in a state facing waste crisis, and grappling with environmental injustice.

Our Environmental Affairs Director, [inaudible] said it best "The trays demonstrate wastefulness is okay. We owe it to our children to practice what we preach and make responsible choices for their future." Finally, in the spring of 2019, the Greenwich Board of Education eliminated styrofoam from the school cafeterias. At first, they transitioned to a paper boat as the molded fiber trays food services intended to use contain PFAS. They have since been reformulated, but this is a cautionary tale to schools and to the Committee, not to replace one hazardous product with another to avoid regrettable substitutions.

I would recommend that schools be required to use only BPI-certified compostable products as they will not contain PFAS. Even more, I would suggest that school districts adopt a reusable food wear over disposables. The most responsible decision that in the long run will save money and is the only waste-free sustainable solution.

The fight to transition away from polystyrene was not an easy road for advocates in Greenwich. And I worry for other districts trying to move in this -- in this direction. We need our legislators to stand up for our children and safeguard their health. We need you to protect our environment from toxic polystyrene, and to advocate for more sustainable waste practices, eliminating the millions of styrofoam trays that make up -- make their way from school cafeterias to incinerators polluting Connecticut's most vulnerable communities. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): I'm muted. [laughs]

JULIE DESCHAMPS: You're muted.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Ms. DesChamps, for your testimony and for all your advocacy. It sounds like it was a long road, but you were able to get so much accomplished in your town of Greenwich. It also sounds like -- we heard earlier from Ms. Getz of BYOCT, that Greenwich is moving towards town-wide bans on some of the items that are contained in this Bill.

And I will just point you as reference, we do have a toxicity Bill pertaining to PPOs and packaging, and other materials that would be of interest perhaps as you talk about some of these other potentially hazardous items that we would be replacing with styrofoam. So I just appreciate all of that. And I see Representatives Demicco has his hand up. Representative.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you, Julie, for coming and testifying. So, I just wanted to pick up on what Senator Cohen was discussing with you just briefly, just now. So I'm kind of curious, is it a financial concern? Is it a labor-intensive concern that precludes the schools from going to reusable materials? In other words, I appreciate what you had to say about moving from one single-use product to another single-use product and the problems, you know, that are inherent there. So, what is precluding schools and other entities, as far as you know, from going back to the old-fashioned reusable items?

JULIE DISCHAMPS: Well, I was more referencing that -- I think in some communities and a lot of communities that there's just not this groundswell of support. And people just don't have time to go to every single board event meeting, you know, constantly lobbying the superintendent, the food services director. It was a really, really long

road, and took a lot of time and a lot of effort from a lot of people.

And I'm just not so sure that every community in Connecticut can go through this entire process to get, you know, the same result, getting styrofoam out of the school cafeterias. I know that schools are concerned with, you know, the price tag for other disposables. But really, you know, if there were PCBs and the [inaudible] no problem, their money's there to get them out, right? Is there pasta in your walls? There's no problem. We're gonna get them out. This is the same thing. There's a toxic substance in our school cafeterias, and we need to pay to get them out.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): No, I appreciate that. And maybe I wasn't clear enough in my question. I'm just curious to know why can't we -- I'm not phrasing it properly, perhaps. Wouldn't it be a better idea instead of going from a throwaway product to another throwaway product to go to a permanent product like we did back in the good old days? Or is there some reason why we can't do that?

JULIE DISCHAMPS: I think that's the best solution. If we could move to a reusable product. In fact, we piloted stainless steel trays in one of our elementary schools that had a dishwasher, and it worked fabulously. We cut waste by 80%. It was really fantastic. Our school district is still looking at options to move to reusable system. Unfortunately, with COVID, you know, things have been disrupted severely, but, you know, when things get back to normal, we're gonna further explore that route.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Okay. No, great. I appreciate that. Thank you.

JULIE DISCHAMPS: Thank you very much.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Thanks, Madam Chair

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Representative. All right. I don't see any other questions. So thank you again for your time and testimony.

REP. DEMICCO (21ST): Thank you very much, Senator Cohen.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Alright. Next, we have Jo-Anne Basile, followed by Betsy Gara, followed by Paulina Muratore. Jo-Anne, welcome.

JO-ANNE BASILE: Thank you. And thank you, Co-Chair Cohen and Borer, all of the Vice Chairs and Ranking Members and the Honorable Members of the Committee. I'm Jo-Anne Basile. I'm the Executive Director of Connecticut Votes for Animals. And I happen to live in Guilford, Connecticut. And I am a constituent of Senator Cohen. So much has already been said about the Bills that I'm going to speak to. I wanted to just raise a couple of issues.

First of all CVA is an animal advocacy organizations representing more than 5,500 Connecticut residents throughout the state. And we strongly support policies that involve Connecticut's participation in saving imperiled animals from needless slaughter, including trophy hunting, poaching, and wildlife trafficking. Accordingly, we strongly support SB 925. You've heard from many of the other speakers, all the reasons why we would do that. We want to applaud the Committee's actions in the past two years in moving this Bill out of Committee and trust that commitment will remain strong in 2021.

I'd also just say, on a personal note, I have been on a safari. And if you have had the wonderful experience of being able to see the big five, and if you could see them, you would never understand why people would want to kill them.

So let me turn quickly then to HB 6504, which CVA supports with some reservations. And we wanna

command the Department of Agriculture for it both successful implementation of the IPCP program, as well as increasing the amount of funding available for the feral cat program, and also raising the veterinary voucher cost. Obviously, something that needed to be done.

I'd like to just draw the Committee's attention to one item. Currently, the APCP program has a mandated \$300,000 dollar limit by which, if the funding is there, they must stop funding programs. This past year in 2021, they initiated the program in July of 2020, and they had to stop it in December, because they had reached that limit. Now, that meant that -- that means that, for the next six months, there is no low-income vouchers being given. And I'm not sure I fully understand the reason for this \$300,000 dollar limit. It is, in fact, statutory. And so we would urge the Committee to look at that, and perhaps consider giving the Department of Agriculture, some flexibility to go below that number, if, in fact, they find that they are running out of funds well before the end of the fiscal year.

Secondly obviously, we want to bring up again and show our concern about the question of the definition of the term "animal." I think you've heard from so many people from both sides of this issue that this is not an easy and simple answer. And I think that the department is to be commended in terms of trying to tackle this issue, but I don't think they're there yet. And I would hope and recommend that the Committee would actually remove that section from this statute -- this Bill, so that the Bill can move forward. But in fact, direct the commission to this summer, pull together the interested parties so that we, in fact, can find a definition that is good for everyone. And that would be both the Department of Agriculture, as well as with the department of -- with DEEP.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Thank you very much. We just reached our three minute,s, and I just wanted to note that.

JO-ANNE BASILE: Okay. Well, Senator Cohen, I'm gonna send you a personal note about the issue of upgrading standards for municipal shelters. You have a wonderful example in Branford at the Dan Cosgrove Animal Shelter. They have a new shelter that they're building. I think they would be a tremendous resource to the Committee in terms of looking at how you develop standards that are both humane as well as sanitary, and so on.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you for that, Jo-Anne, because I -- you know, we heard a testimony earlier from the Connecticut Humane Society talking about, you know, antiquated standards and, you know, the need to update those standards highly go about doing that. And then that exist anywhere that we could really pull from, I think that's the question at this point.

JO-ANNE BASILE: We'd like to associate ourselves with the comments of the Connecticut Humane Society. I think they raise a very good and very serious question.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yep. Great. Well, I appreciate that. And I see Representative Mushinsky has her hand up for you.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Jo-Anne, I miss you on the train.

JO-ANNE BASILE: I miss you too. [laughs].

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): The tech instead. Oh, well, I have questions on the spay/neuter program. I was the author of the spay/neuter program.

JO-ANNE BASILE: I know.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): And the reason the \$300,000 was in there was the department wanted to be sure they could keep their -- as I remember, they wanted to make sure they could keep their staff on board in a continuous manner and not have to lay them off and put them back on. So, they put a cushion in there for the staff and to front some of the fees. So that was really why that number was picked. If the number is out of date, you can talk to the Commissioner and see if there's a new number that we should be using. But the reason was to protect the department, so they wouldn't go into the red for part of the year. Okay. So that's why that number is there.

The law is out of date periodically, just like the Medicare law fails to reimburse doctors for the -- for what it costs them to treat a human patient. This Bill also gets out -- this law gets out of date because the vet fees are pegged in the law.

And I was wondering, is there anything we could index rather than having to manually change the vet fees in the statute every ten years or so? Is there anything we could do to index the vet fees so they would automatically match real-world conditions? Something we could tie it to, in the statute, rather than manually changing the number?

JO-ANNE BASILE: You know, it's a very interesting question, Representative Mushinsky. And I don't have a simple answer for it, but I would say that that is that -- that is true. There's obviously a finite amount of money. And if you peg veterinary costs of reimbursements, for instance, so cost of living, you might find that escalating faster than, and draining out, if you will, even more so the amount of money that is available for vouchers.

There is also, a problem that, you know, they allocate these vouchers and if they aren't -- and if the vouchers are so low, the doctors -- the veterinarians aren't interested in taking the

animals. So there's got to be a balancing act there. Again, I would like to see there -- I think, honestly, I think, the program is in need of an overhaul. People need to look at it. There are questions about [inaudible] peg the veterinary reimbursement costs to a some kind of an economic indicator. Can you also -- you know, should we be looking at that \$300,000 dollars? I mean, how do you justify a low-income program that ends within six months of when it began? Doesn't make any sense? And you're sitting there with a pile of money. Which as we all know, if there was a sweep, we'd lose.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Well, there was an attempt to sweep, and the money was claimed after a court -- after court case. But anyway, even if we fixed this now temporarily with the statutory fix, we really should look at this long-term. Because I don't like the way it's operating where it works really well, and then suddenly it has to shut down and then lose 15 veterinarians.

JO-ANNE BASILE: I agree.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): And then you have to go get them again, and tell them we've changed the fees, they can come back into the program. And meanwhile, you're turning people away.

JO-ANNE BASILE: Well, and you're [crosstalk].

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): I'd like it to be stable.

JO-ANNE BASILE: Yeah, you have to be congratulated because it's one of the most successful programs I think we have in the state. And we need to do something to really preserve it and make sure that it operates on a continuous basis. Everybody wins.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): All right. So, if you and the Commissioner -- Commissioner's staff could talk about this and see if there's a way to stabilize it.

Otherwise, I guess we have to do another bandaid fix. But I'd rather stabilize it permanently if we could.

JO-ANNE BASILE: Okay. We will certainly look into that. Thank you.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85TH): Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thanks, Representative.
Senator Miner.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. So, the Commissioner and I had a conversation much earlier today about imported dogs and the health risk, and the -- his interest, the agency's interest, in having a veterinarian inspect that dog upon arrival. Are you -- you're okay with that part of the Bill?

JO-ANNE BASILE: Yeah, absolutely, Senator Miner. You know, I got to tell you, I've got to go back and take a look at current law. It has been my understanding, and I've worked with some of these -- just on a personal level, with some of these rescue groups when they bring dogs in, particularly from the South; as you know, I have one actually in the dog hospital as opposed to being downstairs. But it has always been my understanding that those dogs were, in fact -- they, in fact, had to see a veterinarian at the time they were imported into Connecticut. They had -- they have to provide a certificate of health when they're being exported. And I thought I had -- there was a limited -- there was an amount of time where they had to see a veterinarian - excuse me - at the time after they were adopted. Or perhaps, maybe this is now before they're being adopted. We have no problem with that. We absolutely agree. You wanna be able to ensure as best as we can, the health, at least get the animal started off in a good healthy way is good for both the animal, and it's obviously good for the pet parent. So yeah, we agree.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): And so, my other question to the point of, you know, trying to make sure that the program for spay/neuter continues to move forward on a more consistent basis. I keep thinking about changes that have occurred, and are continuously proposed in the sale of cats and dogs within the state of Connecticut, predominantly through pet shops. And I wonder if a modest fee were to accompany the importation of a dog into Connecticut. My recollection is it's about 28,000 animals a year. You know, \$10 dollars on 28,000 would more than double the amount of money in that fund. What would you think about that option?

JO-ANNE BASILE: I certainly -- we would certainly want to explore different funding options for the APCP program. I mean, right now, as you know, it is basically -- it's a fee, so it's consumer-driven. So, I don't believe there's any state money in that program whatsoever. I believe it's all solved generally.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Right. I believe it's a fee when you adopt a dog out of a municipal pound. I don't think there is a fee when you adopt a dog anywhere else. And so, it's not a --

JO-ANNE BASILE: Correct.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): It's not an even-up fee.

JO-ANNE BASILE: Yeah.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Most of my constituents are doing business over the internet. They have all sorts of issues. But nonetheless, at least it would provide some continuum of care for those that believe strongly that spay and neuter of animals is probably the -- the most likely solution to having unwanted cats and dogs, I guess, roaming around the state of Connecticut. So, maybe we can talk about

that further, or perhaps you'd consider that as a friendly amendment.

JO-ANNE BASILE: You know, I concur, and you are right. As I said, the APCP program is incredibly successful, and it does get to just [inaudible] finding unwanted animals. And finding a way of giving it some sustainable funding is a very good idea.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Senator Miner. Jo-Anne, I don't see any other questions from the Committee, so thank you for your time and testimony.

JO-ANNE BASILE: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Next, we have Betsy Gara, followed by Paulina Muratore, followed by Uchenna Bright. Hi, Betsy, welcome. Thanks for your patience.

BETSY GARA: Thank you, Senator. Thank you for your patience, and the Committee Members'. My name is Betsy Gara. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns. And I'm here to support House Bill 6497, which is an enabling authorization, which allows municipalities to create a stormwater authority to assist them in funding stormwater management compliance, which is needed to protect our water resources and water bodies.

As you probably heard earlier today, when DEEP reissued the [inaudible] general permit in 2017, under EPA's stormwater phase two rules. There was certainly a considerable amount of requirements that were applicable to many towns. In fact, the permit now applies to approximately 121 towns under the definitions included under the federal law. This has resulted in significant costs of town, sometimes overwhelming costs associated with purchasing new

equipment, with legal fees, engineering costs, staff costs, consultant costs, and it is an ongoing expenditure. And we do believe at this point that it is necessary to provide towns with some opportunity to determine whether or not, in conjunction with their local legislative body, whether they should create a stormwater authority that would allow them to set fees based on how much stormwater a property contributes to the system.

And so we think that this could be a fair way of funding stormwater. I know EPA has indicated that stormwater management is probably one of the biggest funding requirements that are facing municipalities. And although we have a clean water fund and a state revolving fund for drinking water, we don't have a dedicated fund for stormwater management. And again, this would provide towns with the opportunity to do that. So, I appreciate your listening. And I have submitted written comments. And I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Betsy. It's good to hear [inaudible] on this. Any questions from the Committee? All right. Well, thank you so much for being with us tonight. I appreciate it.

BETSY GARA: All right. Thank you. Have a good evening.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): You too. All right. We have -- we're down to the last three here, Paulina Muratore, Uchenna Bright, and Laurie Maulucci. Paulina, are you with us?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Sorry, Senator Cohen, we don't have number 60 in the room.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Thank you. Hi, Paulina. I probably butchered your last name. I apologize. Please correct me.

PAULINA MURATORE: No, it's okay. You were close. Muratore. So, thanks again. Holding up to the back of the line here. I'm glad you're all still on. I'm happy to finally give my very brief, hopefully, testimony to not keep you all too much longer. I wanna thank the Chairs, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Paulina Muratore, and I'm a Senior Transportation Campaign Organizer with the Union of Concerned Scientists. I'm testifying today in support of Senate Bill 931, AN ACT CONCERNING EMISSIONS STANDARDS FOR MEDIUM AND HEAVY DUTY VEHICLES.

We think this Bill is a critical step in the right direction as Connecticut continues to make headway on the clean energy and transportation policy, namely how the state will achieve widespread deployment of zero-emission trucks and other heavy-duty vehicles. You all know this, but the transportation sector, it's the largest source of global warming pollution within the state, and is the key sector to focus on in order to reach climate goals and achieve co-benefits such as clean air and healthier communities.

And across the nation, heavy-duty trucks represent only 10% of vehicles on the road, but are disproportionately responsible for local air pollution. UCS analysis has shown that these vehicles make up 45% of on-road nitrogen oxide emissions, and 57% of on-road fine particulate matter emissions.

As has been mentioned, this local air pollution is extremely detrimental to public health, leading to respiratory illnesses, missed work in school days, emergency room visits, and even early death. And what's more, communities of color across the Northeast region, breathe on average 66% more of this pollution from on-road vehicles, than do the White residents.

Adopting California's medium and heavy-duty emissions and sales standards, and pairing them with other targeted local emission reduction policies can help Connecticut start to reduce this historic and current inequity along with neighboring states who have been engaged. These vehicles are already available in a wide variety of models and sizes, and decreasing costs means that they will soon reach upfront parity with traditional combustion engine trucks. And battery-electric trucks also do not release tailpipe emissions. When charged on the average us electrical grid, they have 44 to 79 percent lower [inaudible].

So, just in some, we really support this Bill. We support Connecticut continuing to be a leader in this space. And along with my testimony, I'm also submitting a recent letter that was signed by 86 groups about the multi-state MOU to the Northeast State for Coordinated Air Use Management's comment portal, which was alluded to in someone else's testimony as well. Thank you for your time. And thank you for hanging in this long. Happy to take any questions if there are some.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you, Ms. Muratore. Are there any questions from the Committee? All right. Seeing none. Thank you for being with us tonight.

PAULINA MURATORE: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Gaia, is number 60 coming, or no?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: No, I don't have number 60 in the room.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Okay. Last but not least, Laurie Maulucci, welcome.

LAURIE MAULUCCI: Thank you very much. Good evening, Senator Cohen, Representative Borer, Members of the Environment Committee. I know you're

crushed that number 61 is finally upon us. It's been a very long day. I come before you as president of the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners, which represents the members of over 50 dog clubs in the state of Connecticut, as well as the over 50% of Connecticut households that contain at least one dog.

The Federation supports the passage of House Bill 6504, particularly Section 9, which addresses the importance of requiring a veterinarian examination for dogs and cats being imported into this state. While we acknowledge that there are responsible shelters and rescues who currently work to ensure the safety of Connecticut's population, we are sadly aware that there are also those who do not operate in that manner.

2019 US Department of Agriculture report indicated that over 1 million, mostly rescue dogs, were imported into the United States from foreign nations. With less than 3000 of that 1 million having had the required veterinary exam. Many of these dogs are intended for transfer to local rescue organizations, including some organizations in our state. To ensure that any of these dogs subsequently imported into Connecticut are healthy, a Connecticut veterinary exam must be required.

Senator Miner pointed out earlier, the number of dogs that originate in Connecticut do not meet the consumer demand resulting in significant importation into this state, as well as surrounding states. Protecting the health and welfare of the human and animal population of Connecticut is of utmost importance. And we are grateful to Commissioner Hurlburt and his staff, and this Committee for putting this Bill forward. Thank you again for providing me the ability to testify in HB 6504. Federation is always happy to be part of any conversation about animal welfare in Connecticut.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Thank you so much, Laurie, for your testimony. Does anybody has any questions or comments? All right. Seeing none. I appreciate your testimony tonight. Thank you.

LAURIE MAULUCCI: Thank you.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Gaia, is there anybody else that is -- it doesn't look like we have anybody in the wait, right?

GAIA MCDERMOTT: No, we don't have anyone else in the waiting room.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Well, it looks like we have near the end of our public hearing. But I do want to just give my Co-Chair an opportunity to say a few words. Representative Borer.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you, Senator Cohen. And I know it's been a very long day and night, so thank you all for indulging me. But I did want to make an announcement, and I wanted to make sure I made it here to the Environment Committee. As many of you know, Senator Leone transitioned over to the Department of Transportation. And with that, left a vacancy, and Pat Miller reinforced his Senate seat, and she was successful last night, if we congratulate her in that effort. And that left a vacancy in her role, and she was the bonding Committee Chairwoman.

So I have been offered the position of Bonding Chair, so I'm going to be transitioning out of my role as Environment Chair into that role. So while I'm very excited for the new Chapter, it's really bittersweet for me because I've been on this Committee for four and a half years, and I love the work that we do together. And I think in -- even in my most recent role as co-Chair, I think together with the leadership team and all of you, we set a great agenda that we could be proud of, not just for

this session, but for Connecticut's environment for years to come. And I hope in my new role. I can continue to support our environmental efforts because now I'll be on the funding side, and we've talked about a lot of initiatives that will need that funding. So, I will continue to be a champion for all of us.

And I just really wanna take the opportunity to thank Christine, Senator Cohen, my Co-Chair because we've spent day and night together for the last few months, more time that we've spent with our families. And I think it's been a great partnership, and I really enjoyed working with you. And I just admire your knowledge and passion, and dedication. It's really admirable. So thank you for all that you've taught me and worked with me on. And I wanna thank our Ranking Leader, Senator Miner and Representative Harding. I think, our worked together has all been very professional and bipartisan, and it just demonstrates what a great work you can do when you all work together.

And lastly, I wanna thank all of the Members, all of the Members that have contributed to the environment agenda. This session, we've all learned from each other and just made our legislation -- made us better legislators, and made better legislation for the state of Connecticut for environment, so that we could have a good healthy environment for years to come. So with that, that is my announcement. And yeah, that's my announcement.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Well, I just wanna say congratulations Representative. It has been an absolute pleasure to have you by my side these past couple months. And you are correct in saying that we spend more time together than we do with our family, but I think together, with our Ranking Members and Vice-Chairs, we have developed a really great agenda for this session. And you've really set us up nicely to proceed and in good stead. And I'm confident that, you know, because of all the

hard work you did on the front end, that together with all these Committee Members that we'll get some of these important pieces of legislation accomplished this session. So, thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. I feel good about the place that I'm leaving from.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yeah, that's great. All right. I see Senator Miner has his hand up.

SENATOR MINER (30TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. And I too would like to offer my sincere congratulations. I have greatly enjoyed the time we've spent together. It's unfortunate that this had to all occur via Zoom, via voice. But I'm sure you will do well as Chair of the Bond Committee. And I'm sure we'll come up with a couple of great ideas to send your way, and hope you will remember us fondly when those kind of hit your desk. So, thank you. Godspeed.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you so much, Senator Miner. And, you know, it's been not just as Chair, but we worked together as I was a Member of the Committee. And I came to learn that, when you made a commitment, you honor that commitment, and I really appreciate that. And you're right. I think I just made 187 best friends overnight. [laughter].

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. Representative Harding.

REP. HARDING (107TH): Yes. I just wanna echo what everyone else has said. Dorinda, you've been fantastic to work with. And I really appreciate the time that you've given me to make this Committee bipartisan, which you've really done a great job of. I've been very impressed in the short period of time with your intellect, with your understanding of the legislative process, and your ability, again, to work in a bipartisan fashion to get results. And we're gonna miss you in your leadership capacity

here in this Committee. But I'm sure you're very excited about your new role, and I'm sure you're gonna do great in that new role. So we're gonna miss you, but we'll be seeing you a lot in the building. And looking forward to all the great things you're gonna do in your new role. So congratulations. And thank you for all the time working with me these past couple of months.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thanks so much, Representative Harding. I look forward to seeing you again on the floor. I hope we're back together on the floor soon.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Representative Gresko.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Thank you, Madam Chair. [inaudible] grant money, greenways grant money, heritage funds -- wait, I have a list. So, thank you for having the reins of this important Committee, and doing the work, and the hard work for the months ahead of where we are now. And it's much appreciated by the entire Committee. You'll have a great time of being the volunteer, but don't, you know, don't forget us. Yeah, I'm sure we won't forget you. And when it comes time to fund what I had just mentioned.

And while everybody is here, the question must be posing in all of your brains, and who will be the House Chair of the Environment Committee. And so I'm here to tell you -- I'm not telling you. No. It's gonna be me. So I wanna hopefully endure this tsunami of a Bill information that is waiting for me. And, we will try to navigate through and get some good legislation passed. I'm gonna have to ask for everyone's indulgence to give me some time to catch up. But I promise to do my best. So Dorinda, best of luck to you. And thank you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thanks so much, Joe. And I know that everybody's in good hands with you. And, you know, I -- you mentioned the bonding. Pat

Miller, I have big shoes to fill. I mean, she served with dedication, and a lot of institutional knowledge so, I have a heavy lift on that side of it. But you're right, the bonding, finance revenue bonding, are the three stools of our finances for the state, so it's a critical role, and I'm looking forward to it.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): And thanks, Representative Gresko. You and I have worked together, and it the third year together now. And I know you've been on this Committee for many years, and a lot of these initiatives you've been working hard at work on for a long before my short tenure. So, I always look forward to learning from you, and grateful to have you by my side, as we navigate the rest of this session.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Yeah.

REP. BORER (115TH): And the beautiful thing is, Joe doesn't need to get up to speed because, as Vice-Chair, he's been involved in all of our screening meetings, and crafting the legislation and, you know, you're already there. So, you're ready to take the reins.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Fresher.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Representative Sorry, Joe, were you saying something?

REP. GRESKO (121ST): All right. No pressure.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Yeah. No pressure. Representative Piscopo.

REP. PISCOPO (76TH): Thank you, Madam Chair. Congratulations, Joe. And Dorinda, congratulations [inaudible] I'm Ranking Member over there at the Bonding Sub-Committee, so I'm looking -- very, very much looking forward to working with you.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. I understand; I have a great new partner in you. I've already -- your reputation proceeds you, so I'm looking forward to working with you as well. So, I think so; big congratulations to Joe. I'm not going too far. I'll be here if anybody needs me. And thank you for all the time's work.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Well, we're counting on that during that we'll be -- we'll be knocking on your door, you can count on it. So great that you've been a part of the Committee, and you know how important these initiatives are [crosstalk] on us.

REP. BORER (115TH): That's the great part. All of these initiatives we've been talking about in the Committee saying; where are we going to get the funding? Where are we going to get the funding? I hope -- hope I'm gonna get my hands on the funding.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Not seeing any other questions or comments.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Yeah, just real quick. Before we wrap up, I would be remiss to not at least -- let everyone know who will be taking over as Vice-Chair, and that will be Christine Palm. So we are a good group. And congratulations to Christine, and look forward to working with us.

REP. BORER (115TH): What a team.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Very exciting.

REP. BORER (115TH): Go team.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): Good news at the end of our hearing. Our -- let's see how many hours -- nine-hour hearing was gonna be so exciting. [laughs] So congratulations Christine. Congrats Joe. And congratulations Dorinda. And I'm really looking forward to working with everybody. So, I think we've got a good team going.

REP. BORER (115TH): Thank you. Good luck,
everybody.

GAIA MCDERMOTT: Thank you, everybody.

SENATOR COHEN (12TH): All right. See you all.
This concludes our hearing.

REP. GRESKO (121ST): Good night, everybody.

(UNIDENTIFIED PERSON): Thanks, everybody.

REP. MICHEL (146TH): Good night.