



Testimony on House Bill 5019 (AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FIVE-CENT TAX ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS)

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My name is Donald Emanuel III. I am an intern at the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, Connecticut's free-market think tank. I submit this note in opposition to House Bill 5019.

The proposed **Bill 5019** seeks to impose another tax that places a punitive fine for the daily routine behaviors of Connecticut residents. Taxing bags one receives from shopping not only places an undue burden on the remaining Connecticut residents, it forces them to adjust their behavior in ways that will negatively impact commerce within our state. Taxing bags also presents a serious health risk for Connecticut residents.

If the bag tax is implemented, then the shopping habits of Connecticut's consumers will undoubtedly change. Connecticut residents will surely adjust their shopping habits to avoid the onerous tax. The primary way to avoid such a tax would be to switch to e-commerce. Companies in the e-commerce sector such as Amazon have already enjoyed greater market-share each cycle. Adding a bag tax would only hasten the conversion, as Connecticut residents would choose to shop in ways that allow their purchases to arrive conveniently at their homes. That would cause a further decline in brick and mortar retail traffic and place Connecticut's 180,000 retail-sales jobs¹ in further jeopardy. The sector already faced losses of 3,000 jobs in 2018-2019.¹

Not only is shipping direct to consumer bad for the brick and mortar retailers, it negatively effects the environment. The fossil fuels and packaging required to ship directly to one's doorstep is significantly more wasteful than bulk shipping to a few retail locations.

The economic factors aside, compelling Connecticut residents to adopt the use of reusable bags poses a serious health risk for consumers. According to FoodSafety.Gov, reusable bags can contain harmful levels of *E-coli* and *Salmonella*.² According to agencies in the United States Government, the only effective way to ensure that the harmful germs on reusable bags are destroyed is to wash them in a washing machine with laundry detergent, then place the reusable bags in a dryer.² If Connecticut residents are forced to launder their reusable bags in lieu of contaminating themselves or their families with deadly bacteria, use of resources such as water,

¹ See: <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/ces/nfstatcm.asp>

² See: https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/reusable_bags.html

electricity, and detergent increase. Meanwhile, if residents are not diligent, they will make themselves ill, putting additional strains on the state's health care providers.

The proposed bag tax creates more problems than it solves, and even creates more problems for the environment. We oppose it.