

Testimony in Support of bill S.113  
Melinda Petter, April 25, 2018

Today I represent myself, and a group known as Sustainable Williston, and hundreds of other VT residents who co-signed a letter which I wrote in support of bill S.113.

It's complicated trying to find a clear solution to the problems posed by single-use plastics. Three main factors to consider are: atmospheric carbon, plastics pollution, and economics. These three factors are bound into a triangular relationship. If you research and select an optimum solution for one of these factors, there is a good chance that you have compromised the ideal for the other two.

While we hope for a clear solution here, the available information is incomplete and tangled. For example:

- Denmark in 2018, and the UK in 2011 issued seemingly comprehensive reports detailing the climate impacts from the life cycle of various grocery bags. However, both specifically note that their studies do not address the environmental impacts due to littering.
- Australia published a 2016 report which does discuss environmental impacts on the marine environment and provides a glimpse of the results of a previously implemented plastic bag control policy. But, instead of identifying a best solution at this point, they list a variety of topics for further research.
- In regards to plastics pollution, the media is rife with images of litter, sea life entangled with plastics, whales starved due to ingestion of plastics. But how does one weigh the effect of the death of a whale? Do we use a dollar or ethical scale? How do we compute the impact of plastics waste on a remote beach?
- When considering economics, perhaps we should remember that plastic bags are made from crude oil. US taxpayers pay \$15 billion as direct subsidies to oil companies<sup>1</sup>, plus an additional \$81 billion<sup>2</sup> which our federal government provides in the form of military support to protect oil companies around the globe. This \$81 billion represents 16-20% of the Defense Department's annual budget<sup>3</sup>, and does not even include the full cost of any wars related to oil production. "Obligations to veterans, debt service, lost lives" might total \$4-6 trillion dollars<sup>4</sup>. We all pay for these externalities. So, it's not just a cheap plastic bag when you include all the costs.

Yes, it's very complicated.

Back to the triangle: atmospheric carbon, plastics pollution, and economics. While there is not a clear, comprehensive solution which optimizes each of these factors, there is an action we can take, one action which overall shrinks the size of the triangle. And that action is simply to reduce the use of single-use plastics by passing bill S.113.

I am here today to present a letter signed by nearly 350 residents from 40 different towns in VT. We all strongly support your efforts to regulate single use plastics in VT, and to do so this session.

---

<sup>1</sup> NRDC, 2018, <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/danielle-droitsch/time-us-end-fossil-fuel-subsidies>

<sup>2</sup> CNBC, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/21/us-spends-81-billion-a-year-to-protect-oil-supplies-report-estimates.html>

<sup>3</sup> CNBC, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/21/us-spends-81-billion-a-year-to-protect-oil-supplies-report-estimates.html>

<sup>4</sup> VOX, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2018/9/21/17885832/oil-subsidies-military-protection-supplies-safe>

State of Vermont  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

*Re: Testimony in support of S.113 - An act relating to the prohibition of plastic carryout bags, expanded polystyrene food service products, and single-use plastic straws.*

To Vermont Legislators,

We, the undersigned residents of Vermont are ready to be  
**DONE WITH SINGLE USE PLASTICS!**

We support bill S.113 AND make the following recommendations:

- **Divide bill S.113 into two separate bills** in order to take timely action:
  - Move forward on the prohibition of banning single use plastic bags and implement Straws Upon Request this year.
  - Create a second, companion bill carving out the study and ban on expanded polystyrene food service products. This initiative deserves study AND it should not hold up action on the other components of S.113
- **Redefine single-use plastic carry out bags** to be those having a thickness of less than 4 mils. The current version of the bill identifies a bag thickness of 2.25 mils as the line between single-use and reusable. The 2.25 mils cutoff allows stores to hand out slightly thicker single-use bags, which will likely add to landfill waste and plastic litter. A 4 mil minimum thickness will help close this loophole. A 4 mil limit has already been implemented by at least 25 cities in California, Massachusetts, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Texas.<sup>5</sup>
- **Require paper bags to have recycled content.** California requires "at least 40% post-consumer recycled content".<sup>6</sup> This lowers the environmental impact from paper bag use, and increases demand for recycled paper.
- **Expand the minimum fee on paper bags to also apply to any plastic bags** which still may be available for carryout.

Sincerely,

Vermont Residents

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.retailcrc.org/RegGuidance/rcracompliance/Pages/bagMatrix.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/designing-and-implementing-bag-laws>

Melinda Petter, Williston  
Jeff Petter, Williston  
Caylin McCamp, Williston  
Scott McCamp, Williston  
Brian F. Forrest, Williston  
Reed Carr, Williston  
Jill Carberry, Williston  
Jeff Fehrs, Williston  
Deborah Miuccio, Williston  
Lynn Zanardi Blevins,  
Williston  
Francine S Pomerantz,  
Richmond  
Matthew Wood, Williston  
Kevin Mogerley, St. George  
Ian Stokes, Richmond  
Hannah Rabin, Williston  
Amanda Everse, South  
Burlington  
Jeff Forward, Richmond  
Emina, South Burlington  
Kylie Hanley, Burlington  
Juliana Landis, Burlington  
Meghan Cope, Williston  
Jackie Mangione, Williston  
Andrea Wilson, Williston  
Brooke Bednarke, Colchester  
Jasper Wood, Williston  
Emma Pinezich, Burlington  
Liisa Reimann, Burlington  
Olivia Bulger, Richmond  
Abby Bleything, Winooski  
Sean Bleything, Winooski  
Wendy Verrei-Berenback,  
Jericho  
Elizabeth Mackin, Burlington  
Sarah Kim, Williston  
Isabel Coppola, Burlington  
Lena Molinari, Winooski  
Shawn Christianson,  
Winooski  
Luna Wood, Williston  
Michelle Iasilli, South  
Burlington  
Kari Little, East Montpelier  
Greg Wimer, East Montpelier  
Judi Daly, Moretown  
Gary Vu, South Burlington

Bill Marks, Hinesburg  
Wes Carr, Williston  
Bonnie Morrissey, Colchester  
Sheryl Graves, Winooski  
Jere Conner, Williston  
Cynthia Feltch, Jericho  
Rowan Pannier, Burlington  
Bella Firman, Richmond  
Susan Jaynes, Jericho  
Lisa Meyer, Shelburne  
Jacob Weinstein, Burlington  
Maggie Gordon, Hinesburg  
Steven Bower, Richmond  
Virginia Frey, Williston  
Lucy Burdick, Jeffersonville  
Roxane Robin, Burlington  
Skylar Alger, Burlington  
Abigail Wimett, Burlington  
Alia Barbano-George,  
Vergennes  
Ingrid Mangold, Burlington  
Jay Tandan, Burlington  
Jeremy Hulsey, Williston  
Jason Wilson, Williston  
Cara Feldman-Hunt, Williston  
Jesse Ridolfo, Burlington  
Mary Oliphant, Williston  
Charlotte Graf, Burlington  
Deborah Towne, Underhill  
Allison Fortuna, Williston  
Carolyn Tesini, Williston  
David Kaminsky, Hinesburg  
Meg Handler, Hinesburg  
Meg Thomas, Williston  
Dave Thomas, Williston  
Kathleen Bruce, Hinesburg  
James Bruce, Hinesburg  
Nicole Voth, Williston  
Joan Shaw, Williston  
Natalie Connor, Burlington  
Virginia Clarke, Richmond  
Patricia Raab, Williston  
Virginia McGinn, Williston  
Cris, Williston  
Clare Innes, Hinesburg  
Rosie Harris, Essex  
Sylvie Van Sterthem,  
Williston



Paul Brissette, Williston  
William T Woodford,  
Williston  
Iris Banks, Essex  
Mark Banks, Essex  
Paul Suk-Hyun Yoon, Essex  
Junction  
Elizabeth Forrester, Williston  
Debra Howard, Hinesburg  
Diane Fuchs, Essex Junction  
Christina Erickson, Burlington  
Jessica Lamorey, Williston  
Ron Hunt, Williston  
Katrina Holtz, Colchester  
Marian Willmott, Hinesburg  
Bill Schubart, Hinesburg  
Elise Polli, Williston  
Susan Frederick, Richmond  
Susan Eisenstadt, Burlington  
Catherine Condon,  
Burlington  
Bruce Hewitt, Burlington  
Elise Guyette, South  
Burlington  
Rachel Siegel, Burlington  
Barbara Holzel, Colchester  
Meg Stevens, Burlington  
Sharon Yandow, Essex  
Barbara Walker, Burlington  
Tia Hunt, Addison  
Katherine Schubart,  
Hinesburg

David Cranmer, Williston  
Sarah Clark, South Burlington  
Adrienne Kehn, South  
Burlington  
Lynn Wilson, Winooski  
Robin Harris, Montpelier  
Sue Firman, Essex Junction  
Gordon Gilfilian, Essex  
Junction  
Virginia B. Morton, Williston  
Kenneth N. Morton, Jr.,  
Williston  
Sally Gullion, Colchester  
Betty Molnar, Colchester  
Mary Jo Childs, Williston



Chapin Kaynor, Williston  
Patricia Carr, Williston  
Antoinette Morgan, Essex  
Junction  
Deborah Waterman, Jericho  
Sue Ann Kurek, Essex  
Ryan Gimson, Colchester  
Diane Casey, Colchester  
Matthew Hall, Colchester  
Jean Campbell, Williston  
Celine Teeson, Colchester  
Timiny Bergstrom, Essex  
Betsey Dempsey, Shelburne  
Donald Dempsey, Shelburne  
Sarah Waite, Essex Junction  
Aron Merrill, Williston

Penny Fairhurst, Shelburne  
Jennifer Reardon, Williston  
Joan Mari Bates, Essex  
Junction  
Elisabeth Coleman, Essex  
Steve Coleman, Essex  
Evan Morrison, Williston  
Sascha Mayer, Williston  
Kelsey Pasteris, Colchester  
Laura Lynn Giubardo,  
Williston  
Rebecca Brooks, Williston  
Bob Pasco, Williston  
Stefanie Kingzett, East Barre  
Stephen Lane, Colchester  
Ariel Duquette, Barre  
Beth Custer, Essex Junction  
Hannah Jackson, Colchester  
Doug Jackson, Colchester  
Cyndi Haselton, Colchester  
Joy A Peterson, Williston  
Katja Nystrom, Colchester  
Chana Sieffert, St. George  
Cheryl Dorschner, Williston  
Stephen Mease, Williston  
Rebecca Asarese, Colchester  
Cheryl Van Epps, Essex  
Beth Gutwin, Williston  
David N. Schwartz, Williston  
Valerie Greene, Essex  
Cat Earisman, Essex  
Kathleen Frisbie, Essex  
Carol Janov, Williston  
Deborah A Manning,  
Williston  
Rickie Emerson, Williston  
Linda Forrest, Williston  
Tricia Knoll, Williston  
Cathynn L LaRose, Williston  
Will Bohmann, Williston  
Anne Wulffraat, Underhill  
Chase Daniel Leonard,  
Williston  
Zoey Skapof, Williston  
Maggie Lawrence, Williston  
Daisy Swindell, Williston  
Claire Kim, Williston  
Mackenzie Yandow, Williston

Skyler Cousino, Williston  
Kady Cassani, Williston  
Maggie Connors, Williston  
Nikolas Bovat, St. George  
Miranda J. Stewart, Williston  
Hannah Blanchard, Williston  
Shamus Phelan, Williston  
Ella Russell, Williston  
Luke Buehler, Williston  
Hailey, Williston  
Barbara Hollingdale, Essex  
William Riley, Essex Junction  
Irina Polandova, South  
Burlington  
Ben Rose, Williston  
Helen Weston, Williston  
Sandy Henneberger,  
Colchester  
Bob Henneberger, Colchester  
Linda Watson, Monkton  
Barbara Autken, Lincoln  
Cecil Foster, Bristol  
Alison Frey, Williston  
Jim Stapleton, Bristol  
Janet Foster, Bristol  
Eliza Fehrs, Williston  
Alice Leeds, Bristol  
Michelle Downes, Burlington  
Joe Pasteris, Colchester  
Virginia M. Couture,  
Burlington  
Richard E. Thibodeau,  
Worcester  
Dana C Kamencik, Burlington  
Beth A Morway, Bakersfield  
Sally Burrell, Bristol  
Suzie McCoy, Hinesburg  
Clifton Adams Jr, Monkton  
Elizabeth Skarie, Williston  
Jerry Greenfield, Williston  
Elizabeth Macfarlane, Bristol  
Emily Peters, Colchester  
Sarah Russell, Burlington  
Mike Block, Starksboro  
Eileen Curtis, Charlotte  
Valerie Wood-Lewis,  
Burlington  
Barbara Galgon, Hinesburg

Raymond Curtis Jr., Charlotte  
Veronica Ciambra,  
Middlebury  
Ted Lylis, Bristol  
Barbara L Provost, Bristol  
Patricia Heather-Lea, Bristol  
Pam Laser, Burlington  
Linda Gustainis, Burlington  
Rebecca Kodis, Bristol  
Gloria Kamencik, Shelburne  
Lauren Drasler, Burlington  
Elizabeth Logan, Essex  
Junction  
Kimball Office Services,  
Bristol  
Stephanie Tuxill, Lincoln  
Hayley Wilson, Waitsfield  
Matt Germon, Lincoln  
Benjamin Deppman,  
Cornwall  
Robyn Arena, Bristol  
Timothy Fortune, Williston  
Alison M Logan, Colchester  
Tom Quinn, Colchester  
Erin Smith, Hinesburg  
Miriam Granat, Hinesburg  
Sylvie Vidrine, Hinesburg  
Jean Thompson, Hinesburg  
Melanie Rodney, Hinesburg  
Joshua S Stephen, Hinesburg  
Jacob Barrett, (unlisted)  
Martha Perkins, Charlotte  
Helen Shepard, Hinesburg  
Dixie Watson, Bennington  
Rachel Kring, Hinesburg  
Matthew Lapierre, Hinesburg  
Louisa Hammond, South  
Burlington  
Lance W Keimig, Hinesburg  
Mary Loney, Hinesburg  
Melanie Cote, North  
Ferrisburgh  
Jenna Khan, Hinesburg  
Maria Berger, Hinesburg  
Martha Lynn Motschman,  
Hinesburg  
Darcie Thorburn, Hinesburg  
Doug Thorburn, Hinesburg

Emily Haskins, Huntington  
Leyla Dickason, South  
Starksboro  
Kimberly Fry, Hinesburg  
Peter Erb, Hinesburg  
Sharon Bovaird, Shelburne  
Kelsey Carruth, Hinesburg  
Stephen Van Dusen,  
Hinesburg  
Rich Armstrong, Hinesburg  
Nathan Fry, Hinesburg  
Tammy Lavalette, Vergennes  
Karl Novak, Hinesburg  
Natacha Liuzzi, Hinesburg  
Jefferson Hoffer, Burke  
Kristin Darby, Waterbury  
Jake Barrett, Williston  
Susan Bergeron, Hinesburg  
Tomlynn Biondo, Hinesburg  
Jennifer Chiodo, Burlington  
Ethan Hammond-Fortune,  
Williston  
Eileen Mann, Colchester  
Matthew Mitchell, Eden Mills  
Marilyn Bookwalter, Putney  
Margaret A McCormick,  
Bristol  
Nicole Ludwig, Lincoln  
Danielle Doucette, Williston  
Jean Kiedaisch, Hinesburg  
Scott Clark, Burlington  
Alison Parker, Lincoln  
Bob Stahl, Hinesburg  
Jason D'Angelo, Colchester  
Jessica Polk, Colchester  
Sarah Waite, Essex Junction  
Jane Petrillo, Williston  
Sally Linder, Burlington  
Robert Linder, Burlington  
Julia Shaw, Williston  
Daria Bishop, Burlington  
Stephanie Spencer,  
Hinesburg  
Rolf Kielman, Hinesburg  
Chelsea Smiley, Monkton  
Debbie Page, Williston  
Jean Rosenberg, Middlebury  
Joyce Oughstun, Williston

Amy Olmsted, Hubbardton  
Amy Armstrong, Williston  
Susan Hartman, South  
Burlington  
Fred Schroeder, Bristol  
Emily Mitchell, Richmond  
Joseph Haller, Williston  
Kim Hescocock, Cornwall  
Rachel Inker, Jericho  
Jonathan Hescocock, Cornwall  
Carol Price, Bristol  
Polly Dakin, Williston  
Andrea McMahan, Duxbury  
Marcia Reese, Jericho  
Malcolm H. (Skip) Smith,  
Jericho  
Kristine Ference, Bristol  
Lisa Mullerauh, Williston  
Gerald J Couture, Burlington  
Chris Hancock, Waterbury  
Dave Hancock, Waterbury  
Dylan Hancock, Burlington  
Richard Taylor, Bristol  
Lauren Waite, Bristol  
Barbara Forauer, Hinesburg  
Bob Forauer, Hinesburg  
Gary Miller, Williston  
Jacob Robertson, Williston  
Lorelei Camp, Williston  
Reed L Parker, Williston  
Judi Lloyd, Colchester  
Gwen Farrington, Essex

