HOUSE MUNICIPAL AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

March 6, 2019

HB 102 – Permits Towns to Adopt Bylaws to Regulate the Distribution of Single-Use Plastics

Testimony

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Paula Minnehan, Senior VP, State Government Relations with the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA), representing all 26 of the state's community hospitals as well as all specialty hospitals.

The NHHA has concerns with HB 102. While we appreciate the sponsor's intent to address the use of plastics by consumers, we have concerns with how this bill would impact hospitals. Hospitals use a significant amount of single-use plastics for patient care. There is no exception in this bill for medical facilities. In other parts of the country where these types of bills/ordnances have been passed, reasonable exceptions are allowed. We do not believe it is reasonable to include medical facilities subject to these types of regulations. The medical facilities have no reasonable opportunity to eliminate the use of single-use plastics in their patient care areas at this time.

Hospitals in New Hampshire work hard to reduce the volume and toxicity of their waste. The New Hampshire Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (NH3E) was established in September 2001 in response to the ongoing interest expressed by New Hampshire's hospitals around issues such as recycling, waste minimization, environmentally preferable purchasing, mercury reduction, and other concerns related to environmental improvement and sustainability.

The group has met quarterly since 2001 and has closely collaborated with the NH Department of Environmental Services and EPA Region I to advance its efforts.

We do believe this issue deserves further research and study, so our recommendation is to incorporate this bill into HB 617, which creates a study committee to study recycling streams in New Hampshire. That bill passed the House earlier in February.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. I am happy to answer any questions.