



HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

February 27, 2020

HB 1373 –Establishing a Committee to Study the Use of Styrofoam in Schools, Hospitals, and Government Buildings

Testimony

Good morning, Madam Chair 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 1373, as introduced. Specifically, we are concerned that the bill creates a study committee that is focused on hospitals, along with schools and government buildings. It is unclear to us why hospitals are specifically targeted. Hospitals are private health care institutions. While they are large and utilize a lot of materials and services, we do not believe it is appropriate to single out these institutions in the manner that this bill proposes.

Hospitals are certainly supportive of any efforts to reduce and/or eliminate Styrofoam in large institutions. However, we do not believe it is necessary to include hospitals in the study proposed in this bill.

Hospitals have instituted a variety of voluntary efforts aimed at reducing and eliminating the amount of chemicals used in all manners of their industry. NHHA surveyed our hospitals and we have learned that many of the hospitals in New Hampshire no longer use Styrofoam. If they have not yet completely eliminated the use of Styrofoam, they are actively exploring alternatives to convert to 100% compostable products.

One challenge that hospitals are facing is related to the reduction of Styrofoam reduction/elimination is that when some have moved to food packaging that is cardboard-like, it contains PFAS. There are other bills that the legislation is considering this session that addresses food packaging that has PFAS in them. Hospitals are challenged to eliminate all these products in the most efficient and effective way possible when there are currently very few viable alternatives available.

If the committee chooses to move forward with this legislation, we ask that hospitals be removed from the study committee outlined in the bill.

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